Frommer's™

Turkey

with your Family

From bustling bazaars to historic sites

by Carole French

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

VISIT…

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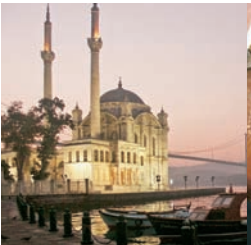

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About the Author

A BBC-trained, award-winning freelance magazine and newspaper journalist, editor, guidebook author and press consultant, **Carole French** is a bit of a restless soul. She likes to travel, both for pleasure and business, and can often be found exploring cities and hotspots around the world. Carole has homes in Essex and the Mediterranean, and 'commutes' between the two, along with travelling the world on assignments. Turkey, and especially the cultural city of Istanbul, is one of her favourite destinations. Carole is married with stepchildren and enjoys nothing more than family holidays.

Acknowledgements

Despite knowing Turkey, its tourist attractions and its lifestyle, undertaking the research for a book such as *Turkey With Your Family* and ensuring all the information it contains is bang up-to-date is a massive task, especially for a country the size of Turkey. It could so easily have sunk without the unstinting help of so many people.

My thanks go to Mark Henshall at John Wiley & Sons for his trust in me to produce a book that will appeal to so many families around the world, and to his colleagues Fiona Quinn and Jill Emeny for their help and support during the project.

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An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors and publisher cannot be held responsible for experiences of readers while travelling. Your safety is important to us however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.

Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Hotels, restaurants and attraction listings in this guide have been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities and special features using a star-rating system. Hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping and nightlife are rated on a scale of zero stars (recommended) to three (exceptional). In addition to the star rating system, we also use 5 feature icons that point you to the great deals, in-the-know advice and unique experiences. Throughout the book, look for:

FIND	Special finds – those places only insiders know about
MOMENT	Special moments – those experiences that memories are made of
VALUE	Great values – where to get the best deals
OVERRATED	Places or experiences not worth your time or money
GREEN	Attractions employing responsible tourism policies

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express
MC	Mastercard
V	Visa

A Note on Prices

In the Family-friendly Accommodation section of this book we have used a price category system.

An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places – hotels, restaurants, shops and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travellers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that too. Please email: frommers@wiley.co.uk or write to:

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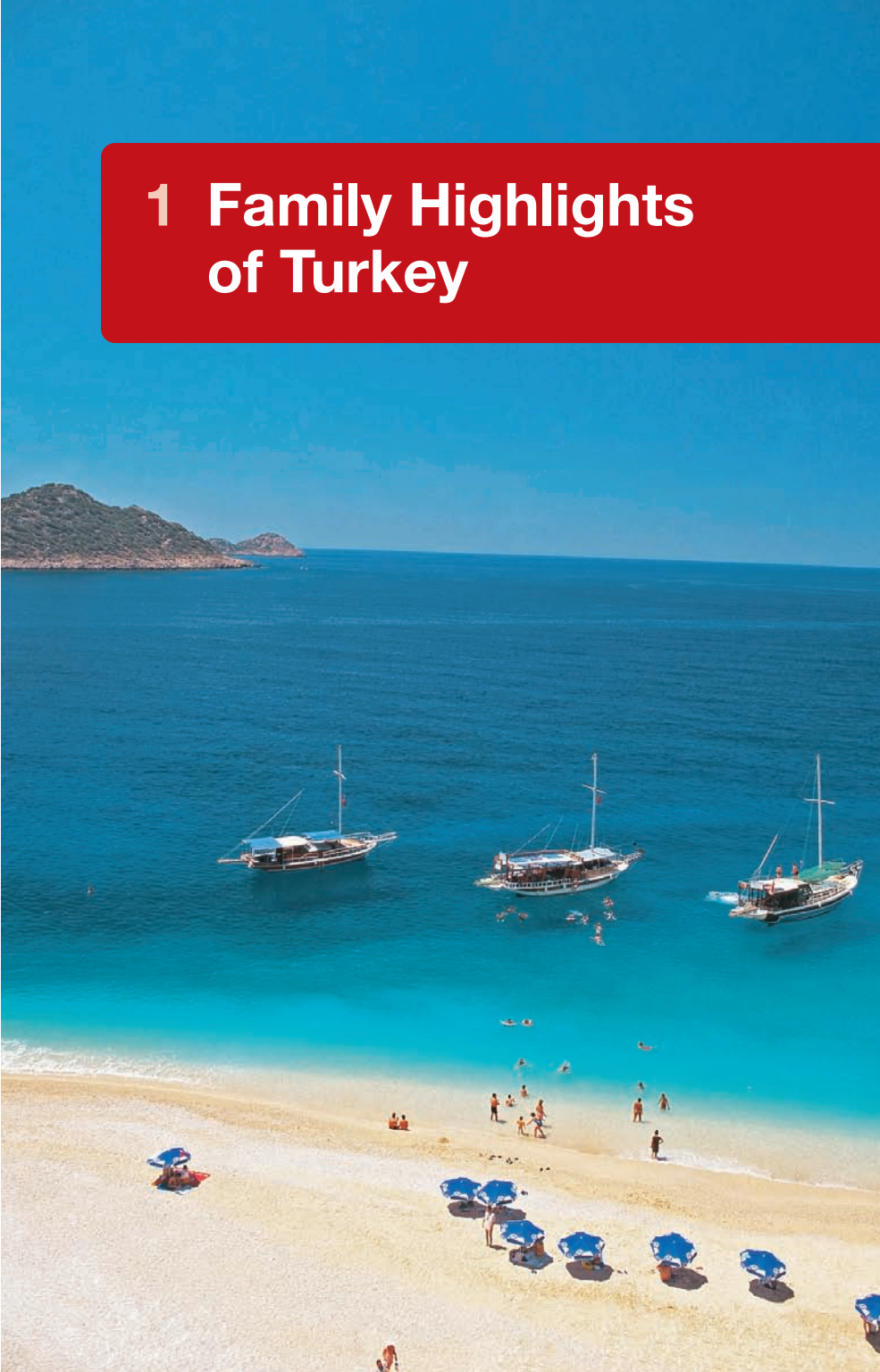
1 Family Highlights of Turkey



TURKEY

0
100 mi
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BLACK SEA
BULGARIA
Edirne
Amasra
Sinop
Zonguldak
Bartin
Ereğli
Safranbolu
Kastamonu
Karabuk
Terkirdağ
Keşan
Istanbul
Gebze
Kocaeli
Sakarya
Düzce
Bolu
Çankiri
Çorum
Sea of Marmara
Aegean Sea
Gallipoli
Yalova
Iznik
İznik Gölü
Bandirma
Çanakkale
Bursa
İnegol
Balıkesir
Bozüyük
Eskişehir
Sincan
Ankara
Kirikkale
Yozgat
Kütahya
Polatli
Lesbos
TURKEY
Akhisar
Manisa
İzmir
Turgutlu
Çeşme
Salihli
Uşak
Afyon
Kirşehir
Tuz Gölü
Kayse
Ürgüp
Akşehir
Aksaray
Odemis
Kuşadasi
Aydin
Dinar
Hoyran Gölü
Samos
Denizli
Beyşehir Gölü
Konya
Niğde
Burdur
Isparta
Seydişehir
Ereğli
Bodrum
Muğla
Karaman
Kos
Marmaris
Antalya
Side
Manavgat
Tarsus
İçel
Fethiye
Kemer
Gulf of Antalya
Alanya
GREEK ISLANDS
Rhodes
Kas
Silifke
Anamur
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CYPRUS
Germany
Poland
Ukraine
Kazaks.
France
Russia
Romania
BLACK SEA
Georgia
Armenia
Italy
Bulgaria
TURKEY
Iran
Greece
Syria
Cyprus
Iraq
Tunisia
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Israel
Jordan
Saudi Arabia
Libya
Egypt

RUSSIA
GEORGIA
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Sivas
Erzincan
Kemaliye
Tunceli
Erçis
Bingol
Mus
Van Gölü
Van
Bitlis
Elazığ
Malatya
Göksun
Diyarbakır
Batman
Siirt
Hakkari
Adiyaman
Siverek
Sirnak
Cizre
Mardin
Zakho
Viranşehir
Şanlıurfa
Osmaniye
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Mosul
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Turkey has long been a popular holiday destination, but in recent years it has emerged as a favourite for family fun too. Children are especially welcomed in Turkey, even admired. A walk through a bazaar or around an historic site will almost inevitably prompt passers-by to talk to, pick up or maybe stroke the hair of the youngsters in the family. For many of us, this can be more than a tad alarming in these safety-conscious times, but providing the usual precautions are observed and the practice of admiring children acknowledged as being part of the local culture, such over-zealousness by complete strangers shouldn't spoil a trip.

However, with this in mind, there aren't as many dedicated attractions for children as you would expect, although more and more theme parks, children's zoos and playgrounds are starting to emerge, especially along the coastlines of the Aegean and the Mediterranean. One of the top theme parks is **Miniaturk** in Istanbul, where many of Turkey's most historic sights can be seen in miniature. There are also several aquaparks, such as the sprawling **Atlantis Waterpark** in Marmaris in the Aegean region, and sealife parks like **Dolphinarium** at Kemer in the Mediterranean region, where children can swim with dolphins. Many hotels and accommodation complexes have their own theme parks and playgrounds tucked away within their grounds, too, along with a full programme of supervised events.

Turkey is a diverse country with high mountains and valleys, coastal regions and inland forests, traditional villages and cosmopolitan cities, such as Ankara and Istanbul. Along the **Mediterranean coast** holiday hotspots include Antalya, Side, Dalyan and Adana, all bustling resorts, along with the sophisticated Bodrum on **the Aegean**, which has its own airport and is especially popular with families that like to sail. To the north of the country, the **Black Sea** has the resorts of Amasra, Trabzon and Sinop, among many others. All have their own characters, and offer much for adults and children of all ages to see and do. Inland, there is the lively city of **Ankara** and the extraordinary 'Fairy Chimney' landscape of **Cappadocia**.

Other family favourites are visiting some of the outstanding historic buildings that Turkey is especially proud of, such as the great **Topkapi Palace** or the **Blue Mosque** in Istanbul, and ancient sites like those at **Çanakkale**, **Ephesus**, **Pergamum**, **Hierapolis**, **Safranbolu** and **Trabzon**, or heading off to the coast and spending time on the country's fine beaches. The beaches on the Mediterranean and Aegean are ideal for young children.

There are seemingly endless opportunities to sail and follow nature trails, dinghy sail, ski, whitewater raft, play golf, horse-ride and even dive. In fact, Turkey has some of the best diving waters in the eastern Mediterranean.

Families can also enjoy the lively street theatre found in some of the larger towns, along with music and dance festivals often held

around the country. Traditional music and dance are an important part of the Turkish culture.

Turkey is a fascinating country and wherever you stay on a family holiday it should be a truly memorable experience for you and your children.

TURKEY FAMILY HIGHLIGHTS

Istanbul

Attending some of the events that take place in Istanbul on 23rd April to mark International Children's Day, a celebration that is recognised by UNICEF. The emphasis is on the fact that children are the future of the nation and, as such, they replace the parliamentarians, including the President and Prime Minister, in the Grand National Assembly for the day to discuss issues that concern youngsters. When the serious business is over, festivals and street events are held, to which everyone is invited. Towns and cities throughout Turkey hold similar events to those in Istanbul. See p. 61.

Looking for unusual souvenirs and haggling in the Grand Bazaar, and then stopping in the lively courtyard between the Blue Mosque and the Aya Sofia for a refreshing drink and ice cream. See p. 64.

Enjoying the Children's Summer Festival held in the Feshane Children's Entertainment Park, just off the Golden Horn at Eyüp. There are fairground rides and competitions, plus special events during festival time. See p. 61.

Visiting the Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace), the Yerebatan Sarayi (the Basilica Cistern) and the site of the ancient Hippodrome stadium, all of which lie around the Sultanahmet Square area. See p. 72.

Taking part in the weekly workshops at the Istanbul Toy Museum. Subjects such as archaeology are covered in a fun, playful way, with workshops tailored to different age groups, from young tots through to teenagers. See p. 62.

Getting into the rhythm at the International Istanbul Music and Dance Festival. Held at venues throughout the city, there's a programme of events to suit all age groups, and music and dance tastes. See p. 62.

Catching an open-top bus sightseeing tour from Taksim Square and seeing the sights like the Dolmabahçe Palace, the mosques, city walls and the waters of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn in style. See p. 96.

Dancing to the Spirit of Anatolia, a show by the Istanbul Dance Ensemble held at the Turkish Cultural Dance Theatre most days of the week. It's colourful, invigorating and ideal for all the family. See p. 62.

Exploring the centuries-old artefacts of Istanbul's Archaeological Museum, near the Topkapi Palace, and chilling in the children's section on the ground floor – the pretend castle offers plenty of fun. See p. 73.

Browsing around the books in Istanbul's Book Bazaar. The courtyard of booksellers and paper merchants, found just off Beyazit Square, or entered via the Grand Bazaar, is both atmospheric and practical – you can find many bargains to take home, but haggling is a must. See p. 64.

Exploring the ruins of the city walls in Istanbul or climbing over its fortresses. See p. 66.

Taking a boat trip along the Bosphorus and seeing the sights of Istanbul from the water. Some trips even offer stopping-off points for you and your children to go ashore. See p. 67.

The Marmara Region

Having fun at the Troy Festival, Troy, Çanakkale, by climbing up the stairs and reaching the inside of the huge wooden horse – a reconstruction of the giant Trojan Horse – and then dancing to the festival music. See p. 90.

Seeing the wonderful pelicans and brightly coloured flamingos at the International Bird Sanctuary Culture and Tourism Festival at the Kuş Cenneti National Park near Balikesir. See p. 90.

Exploring the tiny streets of the Kaleiçi district (the old quarter) of Edirne. See p. 95.

Having fun with the family in a horse-drawn carriage around the Buyuk Ada (Büyükada), one of the Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara, and seeing the colourful wooden homes that look like

Boat trip along the Bosphorus

Trojan Horse, Troy

they should be dolls' houses. See p. 100.

Taking a boat trip along the Dardanelle Straits, seeing the fortresses that line the coastline and looking out for the colourful fish in the waters. See p. 94.

Visiting the Kaz Dağı National Park and gazing at the massive Kaz Dağı mountain range while tucking into a picnic of local Turkish cuisine. See p. 99.

Getting covered in sticky sugar as you try to eat *pişmaniye*, the local delicacy of Iznik. It's a sweet snack made of thin layers of sugar that melt in the mouth and really should be tried, albeit in small quantities. See p. 96.

Making sandcastles on any one of a dozen or more soft sandy beaches that line the coastline of the Sea of Marmara, and then splashing in its cool, safe waters. See p. 98.

Gazing up at the Old Mosque in Edirne and counting the little domes to see how many there are. See p. 103.

The Aegean Region

Tucking into an authentic Turkish family meal – a meze is a good bet as lots of small dishes of local delicacies are served so if some members of the family aren't quite so keen on certain flavours there are plenty of alternatives. See p. 145.

Having fun in the play areas on the water's edge at Kuşadası – the brightly coloured slides and swings offer hours of fun. See p. 126.

Taking the chance to 'play' with a full-size fort on Pigeon Island reached via a causeway from Kuşadası seafront. See p. 137.

Seeing the yachts come and go from the marina on Marmaris seafront, and taking a trip out to see the fish. See p. 126.

Adding a stitch to one of the bold-patterned carpets as it is being made in the tiny village of Mazi, and wondering where in the world it will eventually end up. See p. 141.

Going inside a 'shipwreck' at the Museum of Underwater Archaeology in Bodrum. See p. 141.

Exploring the Castle of St Peter, which was built by the Knights of St John right on the quayside at Bodrum, and playing at being knights or keeping a look out for pirates. Alternatively there's the chance to see pretty jewellery in the Princess Ada Hall. See p. 138.

Playing 'I-spy' for windmills around the countryside near Yalikavak in the south of the Aegean region. See p. 131.

Heading off to Rabbit Island and looking out for families of rabbits. You can get there from Gümüşlük by walking in the shallow waters of the seas. See p. 131.

Visiting Bodrum's ancient Antique Theatre, singing your favourite song out loud and hearing your voice echo back to you. You can do this at several amphitheatres around Turkey, and it's always fun. See p. 135.

Playing in the mud baths and swimming in the natural warm waters near the Roman ruins at Pamukkale. It is a bit of a trek up the hill but taking it slowly with plenty of stops, and then spending some time swimming at the top, is a wonderful experience. See p. 132.

The Mediterranean

Seeing the ballerinas on stage at the Aspendos International Opera and Ballet Festival held at the ancient open-air Aspendos Theatre. See p. 153.

Castle of St Peter, Bodrum

Enjoying a game of pirates in Alanya. Its 9th-century fortress right by the harbour saw plenty of action over the centuries as the town and its dockyard were magnets for pirates. See the ruins of the dockyard jutting out of the sea. See p. 154.

Gazing in wonder at Turkey's largest mosque, the Sabanci Central Mosque in Adana, built along the same lines as the great Blue Mosque in Istanbul. It is simply huge. See p. 154.

Visiting Belek so the boys can have a golf lesson or a game, while mum and the girls can go off shopping around the town's collection of designer fashion shops or hot foot it down to a health spa for some pampering. See p. 155.

Visiting Side's 'Sand Village' where there is, literally, something for all the family, from sailing trips and playgrounds to discos, plus a spot of heritage too. See p. 157.

Finding unusual crafts to take home as a gift or souvenir in the little streets of Kaleiçi, the old quarter of Antalya. You'll find wooden inlaid boxes, trinkets and jewellery, all made in the area, plus lots of pastry goodies. See p. 172.

Snorkelling in the crystal-clear waters of the Aegean and Mediterranean seas off the southern, southwestern and southeastern coastlines. See p. 171.

The Black Sea Region

Horse-riding in the countryside around Kastamonu on one of the super horses available at the International Equestrian Tourism Centre at Daday. See p.194.

Skiing with the family on the slopes of the Ilgaz Mountains in

the Ilgaz National Park near Kastamonu or whitewater rafting in one of its many rivers. See p. 194.

Learning how to barter and securing a bargain souvenir to take home in the Arasta, the Old Bazaar, in Safranbolu. See p. 194.

Exploring the rock caves and the remains of two fortresses at Amasra, and then stopping off at its small castle to play soldiers. See p. 184.

Getting sticky as you eat the gorgeous chocolate-nut candy made in Ordu around the time of the hazelnut harvest, and dancing with the locals as part of its Golden Hazelnut Festival. See p. 183.

Heading out to Akçakoca to cycle and explore its lanes surrounded by hazelnut orchards, and stopping at the nearest market or local shop to buy some. See p. 184.

Taking part in the *dernek* festivities around Trabzon, and trying to learn the steps of the traditional dances that have been handed down through the generations. See p. 183.

Gazing in wonder at the ghostly Sümela Monastery, near Trabzon, which sits high up on the side of a sheer rock face, and then going inside to see the frescos. See p. 191.

Going out for the day onboard one of the little boats that leave the harbour at Sinop and gazing at the coves and forests that face the sea, and then stopping awhile to jump overboard and enjoy a swim in the cool waters. See p. 186.

Ankara & the Anatolia Region

Going up in a hot-air balloon over Cappadocia and seeing the extraordinary rock formations from above, and then landing and gazing at them in wonder up close. See p. 220.

Enjoying the slides and wave pools of Ankara's Aquapark and trying your hand at whitewater rafting, albeit in the safety of the complex. See p. 211.

Visiting the underground city of Derinkuyu, and making your way through the eerie tunnels to see where thousands of people once lived. See p. 215.

Taking a tour of the gardens at the Museum of Anatolian Civilization in Ankara and discovering statues and pots at every turn. See p. 219.

Skiing in the lively resort of Palandöken, and then taking a trip out to see the remains of the ancient city of Erzurum. See p. 215.

Exploring the Soğanli Valley, home of the traditional cloth doll, and buying one as a keepsake. See p. 210.

Gazing in wonder at the huge vintage steam trains at the open-air Turkish Railways Steam

The rock formations at Cappadocia

Locomotive Museum in Ankara. See p. 217.

Having a go at ice-skating at the Olympic-size rink in Belpa. See p. 221.

Seeing a show by the Whirling Dervishes who perform one of the age-old dances of the Anatolia region. Shows are held throughout the country, but particularly in central Turkey. See p. 204.

BEST BEACHES & WATERSPORTS

Istanbul

Marmarcik Cove, which lies a short hop from the city in the village of Rumeli Feneri, offers a great place to relax as a family but there are also cycling routes and a lighthouse to explore. See p. 65.

Solar Beach at Kilyos is great for sports-minded children with everything from windsurfing and jet skiing to basketball, soccer, go-karting and rollerboarding to enjoy. See p. 65.

The Princes' Islands of Kinaliada, Heybeliada, Büyükada and Burgazada, which lie within an easy ferry ride from Istanbul, have some of the finest beaches and watersport opportunities in Turkey. See p. 67.

The Marmara Region

Erdek Beach at the busy resort of Erdek is long and sandy, and lies next to lots of restaurants with children's menus. Ideal for a day on the beach. See p. 98.

Kumla Beach in the Gulf of Gemlik, one of the little coves of the Sea of Marmara, is beautifully soft and sandy, and great for building sandcastles. See p. 98.

Marble Beach on Marmara Island that lies off Erdek and Bandirma is a gem. Famous for its marble, you can see lots of chunks of it on the water's edge. It may be a good idea to ensure your children wear shoes on the beach just in case there are any jagged edges on the marble pieces. See p. 99.

The Gulf of Edremit is another of the sea's coves and has a whole string of beaches in places like Akçay, Edremit, Ören and Burhaniye that are lined by olive trees. See p. 98.

The Aegean Region

Aktur Beach and Halikarya Beach are just two of the many beaches around the Bitez area of Bodrum. Both Blue Flag beaches, they are good for children as they are clean and are safe for swimming as the water is very shallow. See p. 128.

Bardakçi Beach in Bardakçi According to legend, the beach was given its name in ancient times by the male fairy Hermafrodit, who liked it so much he spent many days there. Then it was known as Salmakis. See p. 129.

Gümbet Beach is the liveliest and most popular beach for families. No visit to the Bodrum area of the Aegean region would be complete without spending a few hours building sandcastles in its soft sand. See p. 129.

Ilica Beach in Çeşme attracts families with children because of its soft, white sand, clean and shallow waters and its eateries catering for small appetites. See p. 130.

Iztuzu Beach at Dalyan is a nesting ground for the endangered caretta caretta turtle. It is a government-protected beach with little nearby development. The area's famous mud baths are nearby. See p. 130.

Kadikale Resort beach in Turgutreis is the place if you wish to see some of the 14 islands of the Sporat Group. They lie just off its quayside. See p. 130.

Kargi Koyu Beach, Kargi Koyu Cove is one of the area's best-kept secrets, but you can get a boat trip to it. See p. 130.

Ortakent Beach at Ortakent is the second longest beach in Bodrum, and the best option that like a quieter beach. See p. 131.

The Mediterranean

Konyaalti Beach at Antalya is one of the largest stretches of beach imaginable – you can barely see one end from the other. Although pebbly, it has super-safe waters and lots of watersports on offer. See p. 159.

Lara Beach is just one of numerous glorious beaches and coves that dot the coastline beside the Mediterranean. It is pretty and quiet, and its sand is great for sandcastles. See p. 159.

Ölü Deniz beach

Moonlight Park Beach at Kemer is wonderful for lively families. With a sandy beach, a children's club, dolphinarium with bottlenose dolphins and open-air amphitheatre, there's always lots happening. See p. 159.

Ölü Deniz, with its lagoon of turquoise sea and white beaches, is arguably the prettiest place in Turkey. Its waters are safe for swimming. See p. 159.

Olymbos Beach is worth visiting if only to see its outstanding backdrop of trees and the nearby ancient site of Olymbos. See p. 159.

The Black Sea Region

The Beaches at Rize are clean and sandy, and lie next to hotels and restaurants in this popular holiday resort town. See p. 188.

The Giresun Beaches are some of the best beaches in the Black Sea region, with soft sand and safe waters in which to swim. See p. 188.

The Karagöl Kumluğu Beach and Bahçeler Beach in Sinop are private and relaxing with their coves and mountain backdrop. See p. 188.

BEST PARKS & ZOOS

Istanbul

Gülhane Park, located a stone's throw from the Topkapi Palace in what was once part of its grounds, is a place to relax, walk a little and escape the hustle and bustle of central Istanbul. The aquarium, off to one side of the park, is especially popular with youngsters. See p. 68.

Miniaturk in Istanbul is a large area of rivers, lakes and gardens that contain hundreds of the most

famous historical monuments in Turkey – all in miniature; it is a favourite with children. See the landmark buildings of Istanbul that sit alongside those found in the Anatolia, Aegean and Black Sea regions. See p. 68.

The Feshane Children's Entertainment Park is a perfect place to spend a few hours as a family. There are rides and playground games, plus a regular programme of events and festivals aimed at children. See p. 68.

The Marmara Region

Koza Park in Bursa is one of a few areas that could be considered a themed park in the Marmara region. It is famed as being in the area known for Bursa's silk trade. See p. 101.

The Kuş Cenneti National Park in Balikesir is a great place to visit if you and your family are lovers of wildlife and birds. There are flamingos, pelicans and spoonbills to see. See p. 101.

The Uludağ National Park is a winter sport themed area. Ski slopes for beginners and children have been created in the Uludağ Mountains and are offered alongside runs for the more advanced. See p. 102.

Yildiz Park in Bursa is a great place for children to unwind. There's a boating lake for water activities and the famous Yildiz Park Tea Gardens with goodies for little appetites. See p. 102.

The Aegean Region

Adaland Aquapark, Dolphinpark and Seapark in Kuşadası are perfect for children who love wave pools, swimming with dolphins or seeing brightly coloured fish. All run by the same company and located within walking distance of each other, they offer great days out for children of all ages. See p. 132.

Atlantis Waterpark in Marmaris is another aquapark with swimming pools galore, plus an amusement arcade and an Internet café for older children and teenagers. It lies beside the Atlantis Beach in the heart of this popular tourist spot. See p. 133.

Kültürpark in Izmir offers family fun of a different sort. The largest park in Izmir, it has a children's playground, zoo and an amusement park amongst its amenities. See p. 134.

The Mediterranean

Aqualand and Dolphinland are two theme parks that are interconnected and offer hours of fun for children from tots through to teenagers. There are water flumes and slides, pools and watersports, while at Dolphinland your children can swim with dolphins. See p. 162.

Düzlerçami Park in Antalya has been created to provide a natural habitat for many types of animals such as deer and mountain goats. There are hands-on exhibits for children too. See p. 164.

Waterplanet Aquapark near Alanya and Side offers everything from 23 slides designed for children of all ages, pools and the chance to raft on an artificial river to a children's disco and a programme of fun events. See p. 164.

The Black Sea Region

The Karagöl National Park in Artvin has cycle routes and nature trails that meander past forest areas and alpine lakes. It is a wonderful space for walks. See p. 188.

Ankara & the Anatolia Region

Atatürk Farm and Zoo in Ankara has acres of parkland and orchards to explore. Its zoo contains many species of animals and mammals, and is ideal for a day out to see how they live in special environmentally controlled enclosures. A farm sells the great ice cream made on site. See p. 212.

Youth Park in central Ankara is one of the most popular with residents and visitors to the city. Among the activities offered are boating on the lake, tennis, swimming and al fresco dining in one of its outside cafes. See p. 212.

BEST NATURAL WONDERS

Istanbul

Take a little pleasure craft up the Golden Horn, under the Galata Bridge, and see the city from another angle. You could even stop off at one of the children's playground parks that line its water's edge, or take a walk to see the nearby remains of the city walls. See p. 66.

The Bosphorus splits the city in two and a boat trip is a must when in Istanbul. One side is the European Istanbul, while the other is Asian. The two sides are linked by two bridges, the Bosphorus Bridge and the Faith Sultan Mehmet Bridge, otherwise known as the Bosphorus II Bridge. See p. 67.

The Sea of Marmara links the Aegean Sea with the Black Sea via the Bosphorus strait. Your children will love looking out to see the dozens of freight ships that pass by this stretch of water. See p. 66.

The Marmara Region

Marmara Island can be reached by boat from Erdek or Bandirma. See the fish and go ashore to see the marble for which the island is famed. There are lots of restaurants that welcome children so make a day of it. See p. 66.

The Arifiye Forest around Lake Sapanca, which lies in a basin-like area created within the Saman Mountain range, is a lovely place to go boating, cycling, picnicking and walking. See p. 99.

The Kaz Dağı National Park at Çanakkale is known for its hot springs, parklands and landscape,

including the Kaz Dağı mountain range. You can ride a horse and picnic here. See p. 99.

The Aegean Region

Dilek National Park, Kuşadası, is one of the largest natural parks in Turkey. See wild horses galloping among forest, parkland and along beaches. See p. 133.

Karaada Island at Karaada is one of the prettiest areas with lots of coves and caves to explore. Its mud and thermal springs are fun as well as healthy. See p. 131.

The Village of Gümüşlük is a gem. It stands on the site of the ancient city of Myndos and its ruins can still be seen just under the water's surface if you snorkel out a way. You will be able to see an ancient theatre and some mosaics. See p. 131.

The Mediterranean

Güver Canyon near the famous Düzlerçami Park is an amazingly deep crevice that you can walk beside. It makes an unusual day out and is a popular spot for family picnics. See p. 164.

The Kelebeklar Vadisi, The Valley of Butterflies, near Fethiye is an absolute essential activity to do on a family holiday. Close by is, arguably, the most photographed bay in Europe, the lagoon at Ölü Deniz. See p. 160.

The Upper Düden Waterfalls are not to be missed – you can actually walk behind the cascade of water. Close by are the Lower Düden Waterfalls, which drop straight down to the sea. See p. 161.

Tlos, which has a rock face that looks as though it should come straight out of a Harry Potter novel, will captivate children of all ages – mums and dads too. It's also said to be the home of the mythological winged horse Pegasus. See p. 160.

The Black Sea Region

Uzungöl, known as Long Lake, is an alpine lake not far from Trabzon. It makes a great day out for families that like to go rambling or enjoy river watersports like whitewater rafting. See p. 189.

Ankara & the Anatolia Region

Mount Ararat, or Ağri Dağı as it is known, is a massive extinct volcano that rises alarmingly above the plains of central Turkey. It is the country's highest peak and said to be the resting place of Noah's Ark when the waters subsided. See p. 210.

Soğuksu National Park, a few kilometres north of Ankara, is a sprawling area of parkland, forest and picnic areas. It is great for trekking trips, following nature trails, cycling and spending relaxing days with the family in a natural environment. See p. 211.

The Cappadocian Landscape surrounding the village of Göreme and a few other villages

Mount Ararat

in the Cappadocia region of central Turkey is astonishing. Tall rock formations have been created over time and are known as the 'Fairy Chimneys'. See p. 209.

BEST MUSEUMS & HISTORIC SITES

Istanbul

Deniz Muzesi (the Naval Museum) will give your children a chance to see artefacts from Turkey's seafaring days of the past, including cannons and anchors, pictures, bells and even the remains of ships. See p. 73.

Istanbul Toy Museum is a delight – see dolls that date from the 19th century and a tiny French violin from 1817. The displays are housed in rooms that follow a theme – for example a collection of toy trains sits in a space that resembles a Pullman carriage. You have to pass through a 'submarine' to get to the toilets, which is great fun. See p. 74.

Suleymaniye Mosque is one of Istanbul's great buildings. Founded by the Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent in the 1500s, it shows how life would have been in the city in times gone by. A former school, kitchen and a bath house are within its walls. See p. 71.

The Archaeological Museum in Istanbul is both educational and fun. With a children's museum and play area, plus galleries of classical archaeology, Turkish ceramics, Byzantine artefacts and tiles, and exhibitions telling the story of Istanbul through the ages, the museum has something for everyone. See p. 73.

The Blue Mosque, along with the magnificent Haghia Sophia

Topkapi Palace, Istanbul

church, both Istanbul's 'must-see' landmarks, stand in Sultanahmet Square. They tower over all the other buildings, especially the Blue Mosque with its six minarets that can be seen for miles. Adults and children alike will be enchanted by the sheer size of these outstanding buildings. See p. 71.

The Yerebatan Sarayi (the Basilica Cistern) will either fascinate your children or scare them – so be warned. You take steps down to an underground complex of cisterns that are dark, subtly lit and really quite spooky, but well worth visiting. It's an extraordinary experience. See p. 72.

Topkapi Palace in Istanbul is well worth a visit. Made up of a series of pavilions, it has separate exhibitions of miniatures and Imperial costumes, a collection of arms and armoury, a treasury where valuable gems and sultans' treasures can be seen, and numerous courtyards and gardens. See p. 72.

The Marmara Region

The Archaeological Museum in Kültür Park, Bursa, is a must if your family loves ceremonial armour. On display are weaponry, statues and tools, as well as armour, from the Ottoman, Byzantine and Roman periods. See p. 106.

The Atatürk and Ethnography Museum in Adapazari, Sakarya, is a fascinating museum that tells the story of Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. It is both interesting and educational. See p. 108.

The Çanakkale Archaeological Museum in Çanakkale is a must to visit, with displays ranging from fossils, children's toys, tools, weapons to household items from past civilisations up to more recent times. See p. 107.

The Iznik Museum in Iznik celebrates the craft of producing the blue-and-white tiles, plates and pots seen throughout Turkey and known as Iznik ceramics. Children will love the collection of miniatures. See p. 108.

The Söğüt Museum in Bilecik, in the Sakarya Valley, tells how residents lived during the Ottoman Empire. There's also a collection of life-size busts of famous figures from Turkey's history. See p. 108.

The Turkish Islamic Art Museum is located within its great Selimiye Mosque in Edirne. Your boys will love the shields used in various battles. See p. 109.

The Aegean Region

When it comes to astonishingly historic sites, the Aegean offers the best, including three of the Ancient Wonders of the World at Ephesus, Hierapolis and Pergamum.

Ephesus is one of the most famous and best-preserved ancient cities in the world and should not be missed. The Temple of Artemis is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. See p. 136.

Hierapolis is an early version of a spa town dating from before the time of Christ. See p. 137.

Pergamum, is an important and once-beautiful ancient city and site of the famous Temple of Trajan. See p. 137.

Çeşme Kalesi in Çeşme is a remarkably intact 16th-century castles that your children will love to explore. It was built to protect the town from pirates. Inside, there's a good nautical museum. See p. 135.

King Mausoleus's Tomb in Bodrum is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It's great for families that like history and archaeology. See p. 137.

The Kuşadası Train Museum in Kuşadası has around 30 locomotives dating back decades in its sprawling open-air display. Your children will be delighted to see, touch and climb aboard them. See p. 140.

The Mediterranean

Fethiye Archaeological Museum has some quite outstanding exhibits found locally, dating from the Ottoman, Byzantine and Persian periods. Although not strictly speaking

tailored to children, the museum should interest older members of the family. See p. 167.

Side Museum is a gem. Housed in what was at one time a functional Roman Baths, it tells how residents of the past would spend their leisure time in Frigidariums, Tepidariums and Caldariums. See p. 167.

Suna-Inan Kirac Museum in Antalya offers displays covering the 19th and 20th centuries, with areas dedicated to specific issues in the Turkish culture. One room, for example, tells the story of Turkish coffee, which is fascinating. See p. 168.

The Archaeological Museum in Antalya gives a wonderful insight to the region's rich history. Highlights include finds from the ancient city of Perge. A children's section has interactive exhibits that will help to keep the youngest members of the family interested, plus there are gardens if they need to burn off some energy. See p. 168.

The Black Sea Region

Kastamonu Castle dates from the time when the town was a powerful trading centre. It was built by the family who ruled Trabzon in the 12th century, and is open for your children to explore. See p. 190.

The Giresun Fortress sits like a crown at the top of a hill overlooking the beaches at Giresun. Climbing the hill and exploring the fortress is great fun for youngsters and adults. See p. 190.

The Haghia Sophia, or the Aya Sofya as it is known locally, in Trabzon is one of the best churches-turned-museums in the Black Sea region. Step inside and see some of the best wall paintings in Turkey. See p. 193.

Trabzon Castle is an impressive sight and, being on the top of a hill, dominates the city. It is from the Byzantine, Commagene and Ottoman periods. See p. 192.

Ankara & the Anatolia Region

Kaymakli and Derinkuyu are two underground cities in the heart of Turkey that once housed thousands of Christians fleeing persecution. You can see bedrooms, kitchens and living areas way underground. It's quite eerie. See p. 215.

The Ancient City of Konya is worth a visit, if only to see the old Ottoman-style houses that still exist today, its important mosques, such as the Alaeddin Mosque, and its park. See p. 207.

The Citadel at Ankara is pretty impressive and dates from well before Roman and Byzantine times, but it is the collection of traditional wooden houses within the walls that makes it an interesting part of the city to visit. See p. 213.

Colourful lamps at Fethiye Bazaar

BEST COASTAL TOWNS

Akçakoca is a pretty town surrounded by hazelnut orchards to the west of the Black Sea region. It has some good hotels and restaurants beside its beaches, a castle to explore and a harbour from which little boats can be hired for watersports. See p. 184.

Altinkum has some of the longest and sandiest beaches in the whole of Turkey and, as such, is guaranteed its reputation as a holiday hotspot. There are boat trips, attractions and restaurants with special menus for children to keep you hooked. See p. 122.

Amasra is a harbourside town that can trace its history back many centuries. Your children will love the chance to explore its small castle, the ruins of two fortresses and a few rock caves. See p. 184.

Antalya is the largest coastal town on the Mediterranean coastline. It is elegant with tree-lined avenues and has developed around its gloriously quaint old quarter known as Kaleiçi. Children will love to wander down the old town's little streets. There's an aquapark, zoo and a couple of good beaches. See p. 155.

Belek is the Mediterranean's premier golf resort. Children as well as mums and dads can learn how to play at the various clubs, or indulge in a round at one of several top-notch courses. There are children's clubs, restaurants and shopping malls too. See p. 155.

Bodrum is very popular with holidaying families from

throughout Europe in the summer months. It is large, lively and characterised by its mass of white low-level buildings that snake around its coves and its fairytale castle. It is the location of the mausoleum of King Mausolos, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. See p. 123.

Çanakkale, which lies alongside the Dardanelle Straits in the Marmara region, is famous for its links with the Trojan Horse and the battles of Troy. See a reconstruction model at Hisarlik. It also has some fascinating fortresses, including the 15th-century Çimenlik Fortress, Bigali Castle, Kilitbahir Castle and Seddul Bahir Castle, all of which your children will love. There's a particularly good archaeological museum too. See p. 92.

Çeşme is famed for its spectacular beaches and safe waters for swimming. Its Castle of St Peter perches on its quayside, and the town seems to radiate from its gardens. Attractive and relatively compact, Çeşme has a cultural edge and hosts several international music and art festivals during the year. See p. 125.

Dalyan and Dalaman are in the stretch of coastline famed for its thermal mud baths, rock tombs that date back centuries and the pretty, protected Iztuzu Beach, a nesting ground to the endangered caretta caretta turtle. It has a good choice of hotels too. See p. 125.

Fethiye lies where the Mediterranean and the Aegean coastal regions meet. It is close to the mighty Saklikent gorge and the ancient site of Xanthos, both of which offer a good day out. It has a lively bazaar in the Paspatur district, along with good beaches and safe waters that nestle in a wide bay. Look out for the Lycian tombs in the cliffs. This place is ideal for a family excursion. See p. 155.

Kemer is a sophisticated Mediterranean resort, noted for its fine restaurants, marina and its glorious Kemer Beach. While pebbly, its waters are safe for children to swim and have fun in. The smaller resorts of Beldibi and Tekirova are nearby. See p. 157.

Kuşadası is a popular tourist hotspot that revolves around its marina and cruise-ship port. It is known for its outstanding diving facilities, along with its Blue Flag beaches, coves and the island that rests just a walk away from the quayside over a causeway: Pigeon Island is pretty and home to hundreds of birds and a fort that looks as if a miniature version should be in a playroom. See p. 126.

Marmaris was an important Dorian city in ancient times. Today it has a modern, cosmopolitan feel and attracts holiday-makers by the plane-load. It is known for its lively nightlife, beaches and its good choice of hotels and holiday complexes. See p. 126.

Pigeon Island, Kuşadasi

Ordu lies on the coast in the Black Sea region surrounded by hazelnut orchards and is a sleepy holiday resort at most times of the year, except in September when it bursts into life for the Golden Hazelnut Festival. See p. 186.

Side is a gorgeous town full of character. It sits, primarily, within historic city walls that stand on a headland overlooking the sea. Along with glorious sandy beaches, it offers one of the most memorable sights along the Mediterranean coast – a massive Hellenistic theatre and its Temple of Apollo, a landmark attraction. See p. 157.

Sinop, famous for being the birthplace of Sinope, the mythological leader of the Amazon warriors, stands in a little natural harbour with rows of fishing and leisure boats. It has some good beaches and forest areas to enjoy. See p. 186.

Tekirdağ lies on the banks of the Sea of Marmara in the Marmara region. It is famous for its seemingly endless fields of bright yellow sunflowers that your children will love to be photographed with. There are also some interesting Ottoman buildings and mosques, and long sandy beaches to visit. See p. 96.

Trabzon is one of the busiest and most historic coastal cities in the Black Sea region. It offers every amenity for holidaying families, including Trabzon Castle, mosques and museums such as the great Aya Sofya (Haghia Sophia) and landmarks like the Zağnos Bridge. See p. 186.

BEST INLAND EXPERIENCES

Ankara is a bustling city, but offers several good museums such as the Painting and Sculpture Museum, the Ethnography Museum and the impressive Museum of Anatolian Civilizations. See p. 205.

Cappadocia, an extraordinary volcanic landscape, is where you can see the rock formations known as the 'Fairy Chimneys'. Some were hollowed out and

inhabited for many years. Some are over 40 metres (130 ft) in height. See p. 205.

Köprülü Canyon, not far from Antalya in the Mediterranean region, is the place to head if your older children and teenagers love to go water rafting and kayaking. There are other water-sports too, and the immediate area is good for picnics and jeep safaris. See p. 160.

Pamukkale, which lies a little inland from Marmaris, is an astonishing site, where you can bathe in hot thermal waters and rest your body against ancient columns and frescos that lie under the surface. The remains belong to the ancient city of Hierapolis that lies behind it. You can also see the astonishing Travertine Cascades, or steps, created over centuries as hot springs fell, leaving deposits of limestone See p. 132.

Saklikent Gorge is an outstanding sight. Icy waters have cut a narrow, exceptionally deep gorge in the mountainside high above Fethiye on the Mediterranean region's coast. It is now a popular tourist attraction and picnic spot. Families spend the whole day here exploring. See p. 170.

Selçuk Castle, which stands on the top of Ayasuluk Hill near Selçuk, is said to be where St John the Evangelist lived during the time of Christ. Nearby is the site where the Virgin Mary was believed to have died. The Pope has visited the site. See p. 138.

The Beşköprü Bridge at Adapazari should feature in your agenda if you and your children are keen on photography. The Beşköprü Bridge has eight arches and spans the Sangarious River, or the Sakarya River as it is often known. It is located in the Marmara region and was built around the year 553AD. See p. 105.

The City of Safranbolu is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a 'must' on any visit to the Black Sea region of Turkey. It has beautifully preserved wooden Ottoman mansions, mosques and bazaars. See p. 186.

The Great Saman Mountains in the Marmara region and exploring the Arifye Forest that lies at its foot form a popular family outing. There are picnic areas and nature trails to enjoy, plus water activities on the huge Lake Sapanca. See p. 99.

The Karain Cave, with its interconnecting chambers, may not be everyone's choice, and certainly it's not suitable for young children, but for older members of the family, exploring it is a great experience. Some of the oldest archaeological finds in the Mediterranean region have been found here. See p. 169.

The Locomotive Museum in Ankara has a great collection of vintage steam trains that include models used during World War II. An exhibition area and café are family-friendly. See p. 217.

The Uludağ National Park, near Bursa in the Marmara region, is great for families. In summer there are lots of countryside activities to enjoy like rambling, swimming, birdwatching, cycling, outdoor games and picnics, while in the winter it is transformed into one of Turkey's premier skiing resorts. The slopes are on the side of the Uludağ Mountain. Whatever time of year you visit there's always something to do. See p. 102.

BEST ACCOMMODATION

Istanbul

The Mövenpick Hotel, a modern hotel in the Levent district of the city, has a great selection of pizzas and its famous ice cream on its children's menu, so your youngsters will be spoilt for choice. It also has a children's play facility among its amenities. See p. 80.

The Ritz-Carlton in Elmadag offers lots of safety and security extras to help make your stay in the city stress-free. Children are given crayons, drawing paper and stuffed toys to make their stay special, plus parents are given suggested itineraries with details of attractions that might interest youngsters of all ages. See p. 80.

The Marmara Region

The Grand Yazici Hotel in the Uludağ National Park near Bursa, welcomes children and as such provides lots of amenities for them. In summer months there are play areas, swimming pools and sports such as

Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Istanbul

basketball for them to enjoy, while in winter it provides transport to the ski slopes for which the area is known. Your children will also love the fact that the hotel resembles an alpine chalet, albeit on a grand scale. See p. 112.

The Merit Halki Palace, an historic, colourful chateau-style building, has a wonderful location just a hop from the quayside on Heybeliada, one of the Princes' Islands. Cots, high chairs and buggies are all provided on request, plus the hotel has restaurants with special children's menus and a patisserie on site. See p. 112.

The Aegean Region

The Babaylon Hotel overlooks Sakiz Island from its Çiftlikköy Bay, Çeşme location. A large complex, it offers all sorts of amenities from a children's club with a programme of workshops and special events to children's play areas, gardens and pools. There's a discothèque for older children and teenagers too. See p. 144.

The Hilton Izmir in the busy city of Izmir offers many services for families. Among them are special family package rates, a video hire service, a babysitting service and children's menus. The hotel is located a short walk from the Kültürpark, a large sprawl of parkland with a zoo, amusements and a children's playground. See p. 144.

The Mediterranean

The Concorde Resort and Spa stands right beside Lara Beach in the Mediterranean region and is ideal for a family break. There are play amenities for young children, sports for older children and teenagers, lots of swimming pools, and a great health and fitness suite for mums and dads. Cuisine from around the world is served in adult- and child-sized portions. See p. 175.

The Hotel Alp Pasa in Kaleiçi, the old quarter of Antalya in the Mediterranean region, is a characterful hotel housed in an 18th-century Ottoman-style mansion. Its guest rooms, including a family room, offer traditional décor with wooden features and lots of stonework. Families can dine al fresco around a pool in the summer, and choose from several menus, including one tailored for small appetites. See p. 173.

The Black Sea Region

The Cinci Han Hotel in Safranbolu is famous for being housed in the former caravansaray for passing merchants centuries ago. A luxurious hotel, it offers services such as a children's club, babysitting and a playground, special menus and a central location in the very heart of Safranbolu. See p. 195.

The Demirkol Turkish Hotel is a traditional-style hotel in the centre of Artvin, close to the

Traditional Turkish tea set

town's little Georgian museum. It welcomes children and offers a swimming pool for your little ones, special menus and trekking and cycling in the nearby Karagöl National Park. See p. 194.

Ankara & the Anatolia Region

Büyükhanli Park Hotel in Ankara is a beautiful hotel in the centre of the city that offers everything you need for a family holiday with children – good location, good facilities and good accommodation. See p. 222.

The Serinn Hotel, a boutique hotel created within a natural cave at Ürgüp, Cappadocia, will really capture children's imaginations. The views as well as the facilities are high quality. Lots of special amenities are offered for children. See p. 223.

BEST EATING OUT OPTIONS

Istanbul

Geziistanbul is a stylish, more upmarket style of restaurant that overlooks Taksim Square, and despite appearances it welcomes children with open arms. The staff is friendly and helpful. There's a special children's menu, and it has an in-house chocolaterie and patisserie too. See p. 82.

The Beyaz Restaurant overlooks the Marmara Sea and is right by the fish market**.** Your children will love the chance to pick out their own fish and see it being cooked and then follow this up with a rather delicious homemade crème brulée. See p. 82.

The Marmara Region

Kenan Çorba ve Izgara Salonu in Iznik will delight your children if genuine kebabs are a favourite. The bright and lively restaurant in the heart of the town serves *Dönar* kebabs (sliced meat) and *çiç* kebabs (cubes of meat on skewers), along with local dishes such as *bamya bastisi*, a type of stew made with lamb and tomatoes. See p. 113.

The Yusuf Restoran in the cultural park, the Kültür Park, in Bursa offers mezes comprising 20 to 25 little dishes of local delicacies – even your fussiest child should find something that suits their taste. Other dishes include salads, vegetables and

grills, which can be eaten inside or al fresco style. See p. 113.

The Aegean Region

The Gemibaşi Restaurant, just off the harbourside at Bodrum, is a good place for a great family meze of traditional Turkish cuisine. Grilled meats and fish are served with authentic sauces, and local dishes like *Levrek pilakisi* are a speciality. Kebabs and delicious desserts are on the menu too. See p. 146.

The Mona Titti Restaurant on the seafront at Marmaris is elegant, serves gourmet-style cuisine and is a great place to dine for a special evening out, for your eldest's birthday for example. Its dishes are pure Turkish, albeit with an à la carte twist, and its team is happy to prepare versions of the main meals for children. See p. 146.

The Mediterranean

La Luna Restaurant in the harbour at Alanya is a fun restaurant with cartoons showing on its big screen, dancing, music and a menu that includes tacos from Mexico, pizzas from Italy, kebabs from Turkey and a hearty selection of vegetarian dishes. See p. 175.

The Moonlight Restaurant is situated overlooking the beach and sea at Side, so it's convenient for a family outing and watching the sun go down. The cuisine is largely fish-based, and your children will love the choice of ice creams in, it seems, every flavour. See p. 176.

The Black Sea Region

Tad Pizza and Burger Restaurant in Trabzon offers, some of the best fast food in the area. Pizza toppings include anchovy, a staple of the area. Bright and welcoming, it should suit your children a treat. See p. 196.

The Kadioşlu Sehzade Sofrasi, located right near the bazaar in Safranbolu, has grills and fish, vegetarian, à la carte and authentic Turkish dishes on the menu. It particularly welcomes children. See p. 196.

Ankara & the Anatolia Region

Elai Restaurant in Göreme is located in the centre of the village, which is always buzzing with people who have travelled miles to see the rock formations. They usually stay a while in the Elai, an elegant eaterie serving top-notch French cuisine. It welcomes children. See p. 224.

Selcuklu Beykonagi Restaurant in Konya is an elegant yet informal restaurant housed in an historic house where grills and kebabs, plus its own meze selection, provide a pleasing and wholesome meal option for families. See p. 223.

2 Planning a Family Trip to Turkey

TURKEY REGIONS

Turkey is a fascinating country, but absolutely huge. Much of its tourist industry revolves around holiday complexes that offer families on-site amenities such as playgrounds, watersports, horse-riding and theatre, but for independent travellers there are many experiences to be found that children of all ages should enjoy.

Among them are donkey rides out in the country, cycling and whitewater rafting, mud baths and thermal springs, aquaparks, dolphin parks where they can swim with dolphins, festivals and beaches and excursions to places like Santa Claus's birthplace at Myra in the Mediterranean region. You can also go to Pamukkale on the border of the Aegean and the Mediterranean regions to see the Travertine Cascades, and to historic sites throughout the country.

With this in mind, you will probably earmark the area you wish to stay and then find out more about the nearby tourist attractions that will appeal to children. The Aegean and Mediterranean regions are very much family-orientated, but there are some wonderful things to see and do with your family in the cities of Istanbul and Ankara. The Marmara region sits around the Sea of Marmara and affords some beautiful beaches, while the Black Sea region has beautiful natural parks and vast areas inland such as Cappadocia.

THE REGIONS IN BRIEF

Istanbul – Chapter 3

Although not the capital of Turkey (that privilege lies with Ankara), Istanbul has been an important city for centuries. When it was known as Constantinople, it was integral to the Byzantine Empire and later became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Today, it is where Europe meets Asia, and is a lively, cosmopolitan city with many attractions for visitors to see. Among them are the Suleymaniye Mosque, the lavish Dolmabahçe Palace, Topkapi Palace that exhibits emeralds almost the size of a child's hand, the great Sultan Ahmet Camii (the Blue Mosque) and the Aya Sofya (Haghia Sophia), which older children will find fascinating. Younger ones may appreciate the Miniaturk Park, the outstanding Toy Museum, the excitement of the Grand Bazaar, the Feshane Children's Entertainment Park and a cruise along the Bosphorus River far more.

The Marmara Region – Chapter 4

The region radiates pretty much from Istanbul with lots of towns and cities to see. It surrounds the Sea of Marmara. To the northwest of the sea, the town of Tekirdağ is ideal for families who love to spend some time on the beach, along with Edirne, which is often described as a living museum, and the resort of Kirklareli, which all make up the

Trakya area. All are surrounded by fields of sunflowers – the area is known for them. Along the opposite 'coastline' of the sea there's Çanakkale, forever linked with Homer's legendary Trojan Horse, along with the towns of Iznik, Bursa, Bilecik in the Sakarya River Valley and Yalova, famed for its natural springs. The Marmara region has some outstanding beaches, along with one of Turkey's major ski resorts and parklands to explore.

The Aegean Region – Chapter 5

The Aegean region, with the Mediterranean, is where most holidaymakers from Europe head for if they want beautiful beaches combined with outstanding attractions to see. It has a string of Blue Flag beaches along its coastline, including the protected Iztuzu beach which is a nesting ground for the endangered caretta caretta turtle and the sandy bay of Ölü Deniz, probably the most photographed bay in this part of the world. Its major towns and cities include Ayvalik and Bergama on the southern coast of Edremit Bay, the popular Çeşme, Selçuk, an important religious and tourist town, Izmir and the holiday resorts of Kuşadasi, Bodrum, Marmaris, Altinkum and Dalaman. The region is also home to the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus and King Mausoleus's Tomb in Bodrum, two of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

The Mediterranean Region – Chapter 6

The major towns and cities of Antalya, Alanya, Side, Belek, Kemer and Adana lie in the Mediterranean region of Turkey. The Taurus Mountains, which dominate the area, along with the historical sites of Perge, Kekova Island and Myra, said to be the birthplace of St Nicholas, or Santa Claus, are just waiting to be explored by your little ones. The region, which stretches from the Patara and Fethiye areas right along the southernmost coast to Hatay where it nudges the South East Anatolia region, has numerous activities for children to enjoy, from aquaparks, swimming with dolphins and festivals to sports such as canoeing and sailing.

The Black Sea Region – Chapter 7

Although one of the largest of the regions in Turkey, the Black Sea area leans more towards natural experiences than theme parks and sports centres. For instance, children can enjoy walks, nature trails and watersports in places such as the Ilgaz National Park near Kastamonu. The region is dotted with mountains, alpine lakes and tiny villages. Characterised by its hazelnut orchards and tea plantations, it runs along the northernmost coast from Akçakoca to the west to the city of Artvin, passing Amasra, Sinop, Rize, Ünye and Ordu along the way. The

UNESCO city of Safranbolu and the history-rich Trabzon are both features of the region.

Ankara & the Anatolia Region – Chapter 8

Ankara is the capital of Turkey and as such is a lively, cultural and cosmopolitan city. It also has a large population, and because children are so important to the Turkish people, many theme parks and attractions have been specially created for them. The Anatolia region is vast and comprises mainly huge areas of mountains and countryside, dotted by towns and villages. Its most famous region is Cappadocia, where the extraordinary rock formations around the villages of Göreme, Ürgüp and Derinkuyu, known as the 'Fairy Chimneys', and its hundreds of underground cities, have secured it a place on the world tourist map.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Useful Websites

There are a number of websites to help you as you prepare your itinerary. The ***www.gototurkey.co.uk*** website and the ***www.tourismturkey.org*** website are the official sites of the Turkish Culture and Tourism Office. The first gives in-depth information in English of events and festivals that are happening over the coming months, the location of art venues and museums and where to head for if you love golf or sailing, while ***www.tourismturkey.org*** provides a resource centre for news and information. It covers all the regions and cities, major tourist attractions and leisure activities like winter sports, thermal resorts, yachting, eco-tourism, ornithology and watersports. A number of the towns and cities of the country have their own websites. Among them are ***www.canakkaleguide.com*** for information on Çanakkale, also Pamukkale's site ***www.pamukkale.gov.tr***, Izmir's at ***www.izmirtourizm.gov.tr***, Kuşadasi's at ***www.kusadası.gov.tr***, Selçuk's at ***www.selcuk.gov.tr***, Fethiye's at ***www.fethiye.net***, the bay of Ölü Deniz at ***www.oludenizbeach.com***, Marmaris at ***www.marmarisinfo.com***, Artvin's at ***www.artvin.gov.tr***, and the historic cities of Trabzon and Safranbolu at ***www.trabzonkulturturizm.gov.tr*** and ***www.safranbolu.gov.tr*** respectively.

ESSENTIALS

Getting There

By Plane The easiest way to get to Turkey is by air. All major towns and resorts have modern airports with every convenience for the traveller. Air travel is, by and large, quick, reasonably inexpensive and the most stress-free way to travel with children from Europe.

Major airlines fly in on a daily basis. There are many smaller airports dotted around Turkey too, such as Istanbul's Sabiha Gokcen airport, but these tend to cater for domestic flights only.

The following fly to Turkey daily:

American Airlines (*www.aa.com*)

British Airways (*www.ba.com*)

KLM (*www.klm.com*)

Lufthansa Airlines (*www.lufthansa.com*)

Turkish Airlines (*www.turkishairlines.com*)

Turkey's major airports:

Adnan Menderes International Airport, Izmir *+90 232 455 0000*. *www.adnanmenderesairport.com*

Antalya Airport *+90 242 330 36 00*. *www.aytport.com*

Bodrum-Milas Havaalani Airport, Bodrum *+90 252 523 0080*. *www.bodrum-airport.com*

Dalaman Havalimani Airport *+90 252 792 5555*. *www.atmairport.aero*

Istanbul Atatürk Havalimani International Airport *+90 212 465 5555*. *www.ataturkairport.com*

All airports are on the outskirts of the towns and cities, with taxis available right outside for the onward journeys to holiday accommodation. Allow around 25 minutes to get into the centre of Bodrum, Izmir, Dalaman and Antalya respectively. Istanbul is around 25 kilometres (about 15 minutes) from the city centre.

By Boat There are a number of ferry routes to and from Turkey, operated by the Turkish Maritime Lines (TDI. *www.tdi.com*), and it may be that you will arrive in Turkey by this method. There are ferry links between many ports, including Brindisi in Italy, Piraeus in Greece, the Greek Islands and within Turkey itself. Most arrive in Istanbul or Çesme.

Getting Around

By Car By far the best way to explore Turkey is by car. Most of the major car-hire companies offer services from the country's airports and hotels. Rates are on a par with what you would expect to pay in other countries

Avis, *0844 581 0147*; *www.avis.co.uk*

Budget, *0844 581 9998*; *www.budget.co.uk*

Europcar, *0870 607 5000*; *www.europcar.com*

Hertz, *0870 846 0003*; *www.hertz.co.uk*

If you run into a problem, have an accident or breakdown while in Turkey, you should always follow the advice given to you by your car-hire company. If you need further advice, contact the **Touring Automobile Association of Turkey** (ITOK. *+90 212 282 81 40, www.turing.org.tr*). In terms of finding garages selling fuel, you should have no problem and most will accept credit cards. Cars drive on the right in Turkey

and it is compulsory to wear a seatbelt.

The highways in Turkey around Istanbul, Ankara and the network around Izmir are to a high standard, but elsewhere, particularly smaller 'scenic' routes, the roads can be in a poor state of repair so be on your guard against having an accident. The accident rate in Turkey is considered high compared with other countries. If you are planning to drive while in Turkey, either a hire car or your own, you can do so on a full British or International Driving Licence. Provisional driving licences are not recognised in Turkey. Do not speed while driving and do not drink and drive. There is a 50km per hour speed limit within urban centres and 90km outside urban centres. The police have the power to breathalyse, demand an 'on the spot' fine or confiscate your driving licence if you are over the drink limit.

By Bus **Intercity buses** operate on a highly efficient system within Turkey itself, and run between towns and cities as well as to and from the airports. Intercity buses are generally modern and it is relatively easy to carry a buggy on and off.

The main bus companies are:

Kâmil Koç, Istanbul *+90 212 658 20 00*; Bursa *+90 242 261 50 00*

Ulusoy, Istanbul *+90 212 471 71 00*, ***www.ulusoy.com.tr***

Varan, Istanbul *+90 212 251 74 74*, ***www.varan.com.tr***

Each town has its own bus station (*otogar*) where bus companies have their own office, but information can be obtained from the head offices for all routes. Route information and timetables are available from these offices, the tourist information offices or by telephone or Internet.

Another popular form of transport in some of the larger towns and cities is the **dolmuş**. Again, locals use it because it is inexpensive and each one follows specific routes, albeit to a loose timetable. The idea is that if you see one you can hail it and, once aboard, you can ask the driver to stop wherever you wish along his or her route. Dolmuş buses can be quite small and space is likely to be limited, so if you have buggies and equipment, they won't be terribly comfortable or convenient.

For a little more than double the price you would pay for a bus, you can hail a **taxi** in most towns and cities. In Istanbul you can't help but see the bright orange taxis right outside the airport arrivals terminal or the yellow ones that are everywhere in the city. Even city dwellers use the taxis. All the taxis have a meter, so be sure that the driver has switched it on as you begin your journey. If you are planning to travel by taxi beyond the boundaries of a major town or city, it is advisable to agree a rate in advance.

By Train The rail network is operated by the **Turkish State**

Railway (TCDD. ***www.tcdd.gov.tr***). Almost all start and finish at Istanbul, leaving from **Haydarpaşa Station** (*+90 216 336 04 75*) and **Sires Station** (*+90 212 527 0050*) at regular intervals.

The trains link Ankara and the main cities in the Black Sea, Marmara and Aegean regions. There are a few express routes, the most notable of which is the Haydarpaşa–Adapazarı service that runs regularly from Istanbul and stops at various stations in the region.

In the major cities such as Istanbul there is also a **light railway network** and **trams**, which connect the main areas such as Sirkeci Station, right in the heart of the city at Eminönü, the location of the Bosphorus cruise trips, with Taksim Square and Sultanahmet Square.

A similar service is operated in Ankara. The southwest of the country is not served by rail because of the mountainous terrain.

Entry Requirements & Customs

Passports & Visas

British and many other worldwide passport holders will need a visa to enter and subsequently travel around Turkey. It can be obtained on landing at your chosen airport or port of entry. For instance, at Istanbul's Atatürk Havalimani International Airport (***www.ataturkairport.com***) simply look out for the kiosks marked 'Visa' before you go through Passport Control. You can buy a visa on presentation of your passport. It lasts 90 days and costs £10 sterling, although more if you go to a consulate. Alternatively, you can go to the Turkish Consulate General in London (***www.turkishconsulate.org.uk***) or Turkish Diplomatic Missions in other countries to obtain one prior to travelling. The visa takes the form of a sticker that is stuck to a page in your passport. If there is more than one person travelling on a passport, such as is often the case with a family, then each person is liable for the fee. The visa is intended for leisure travel only. While travelling in Turkey you should carry your passport as a means of identification, although take care to safeguard it against theft. Turks have compulsory ID cards, which they must carry with them at all times and foreigners are expected to carry ID. A photocopy of your passport is acceptable. Make sure you have at least six months' validity remaining on your passport before you travel as you could be refused entry otherwise.

Customs – Arriving in Turkey & Going Home

There are restrictions on what you can bring into Turkey as well as what you can take home with you. Coming in you are permitted to bring no more than 200 cigarettes and 50 cigars, plus 200 grams of tobacco with you,

although you can purchase a further 200 cigarettes, 100 cigars and 500 grams of tobacco in the Turkish Duty Free Shops on arrival. You can also bring two 75cl bottles of wine or spirits, a 120ml bottle of cologne or perfume and restricted amounts of coffee and confectionery (1.5kg coffee and 1kg confectionery). If you are planning to bring valuable items with you, such as expensive jewellery, a large number of electronic items or sports goods, then these should be declared on entry. There is no limit to the amount of foreign and Turkish currency you can bring into Turkey, but you are restricted on the amount you can take out. It must also be proved to have been exchanged legally. Going home you are limited in what you can take back because Turkey is not a member of the EU. If you are planning to purchase expensive items like jewellery or carpets during your stay, you will need to keep the receipt and pay for items using legally exchanged money. You may not under any circumstances take any antiques out of Turkey, or bring or take out any forbidden drugs. It is advisable to carry a note from your doctor if you or any member of your family is travelling with prescribed drugs.

Local Laws

Turkey has local laws that should be obeyed. For instance, it is considered an offence to show disrespect to the country, its flag or its currency. You should not use metal detectors, remove antiques or antiquities, or take photographs near official or military areas. You should also carry some form of ID with you at all times: a photocopy of each of your family's passports is acceptable. You or any member of your family should not consume forbidden drugs.

Money

The Turkish Lira

The currency of Turkey is the new Turkish lira (YTL) and it comes in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 kuruş and 1 YTL coins, and 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 YTL notes. The current exchange rate is around 2.50 YTL to the pound, and 1.31 YTL to the US dollar, although these, of course, change daily. For currency rates and easy online conversions visit ***www.xe.com***. Conversion rates are published daily in Turkish newspapers and at banks too. In Turkey there are exchange offices in the airports and in the centre of major towns and cities. Some banks and many hotels will change money too. If possible, do check in advance if your notes will be accepted. For example, Scottish notes are not accepted in Turkey. Sterling, dollars and euros definitely are. You can exchange money to take with you before travelling to Turkey, but if you are planning to exchange Turkish liras back into your own currency before departure, you are required to declare this to customs officers.

Credit & Debit Cards

Credit cards, such as Visa and MasterCard, are generally accepted in the larger town and city shops and restaurants, although cash is more usual in smaller establishments. Always use cash when bartering in a bazaar or visiting remote villages and craft centres. Not only is it unlikely that credit cards will be accepted, but you should also be able to haggle for a better price with cash. Always let your credit card company know you are travelling to Turkey before you go so that they are not alerted to an unusual spending pattern and put a block on the card. Also be sure to have the emergency contact number for your credit and debit cards with you for use in the event of lost or stolen cards.

Traveller's Cheques & ATMs

If you are planning to carry traveller's cheques with you, perhaps as a back up if you can't find an ATM, you will find that you can only exchange them in banks or major post offices. You will need some form of identification with you. Most major banks do have ATMs so obtaining cash is relatively straightforward. The machines accept most credit and debit cards and you will have the option to request instructions in English. The airports have banks and ATMs too. If you are planning to venture further afield into rural Turkey be sure to take enough cash with you for any likely expenditure, as it may be trickier exchanging money or finding an ATM in smaller towns and villages.

When to Go

The most popular family holiday destinations are the Aegean and Mediterranean, followed by the Marmara and the Black Sea regions. All have beaches and waters for children to enjoy, but their climates can vary enormously. The south of the country, for instance, will be much warmer throughout the year than the north. The Mediterranean and the south Aegean regions enjoy long, hot summers and mild winters, while the north Aegean and Marmara region have a similar climate, albeit with a slightly shorter summer period. The Black Sea region has warm summers and mild winters with a high level of rainfall that gives it its characteristic green, lush look. Inland, summers can be exceptionally hot, although cooler in mountainous areas. Winters can get bitterly cold, often with high levels of snowfall. Istanbul tends to attract 'city breakers' and the climate is usually temperate and pleasant most of the year for sightseeing.

Public Holidays

Public holidays are special events in Turkey and most people will take the day off to be with their family. Some are determined by the government while others are religious. You may find a few supermarkets open in tourist

areas, but generally the shops, any service buildings and banks will be closed.

New Year's Day – 1st January

Sacrifice Festival – January

National Sovereignty and International Children's Day – 23rd April

Atatürk Commemoration and Youths and Sports Festival – 19th May

Victory Day – 30th August

Republic Day – October

Feast of Ramazan – October

Special Events

Many special festivities take place around the country that are ideal for children.

International Children's Day is a public holiday. Children are recognised as being the future of the country, a thought that prompted Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, to declare 23rd April International Children's Day. Every year a week-long programme of events such as exhibitions, festivals and ceremonies is held throughout the country. Children even replace high-ranking government officials from the President, Prime Minister and governors downwards for the day.

The Bodrum Cup's International Wooden Yacht Regatta in Bodrum attracts families keen to either sail themselves or watch the wooden sailing ships take part in exciting races. The event has a festival atmosphere (see p. 122).

The Children's Summer Festival, held in Feshane Children's Entertainment Park in Istanbul every summer (see p. 61), is another good event. Schools from around the city host festivals and events aimed specifically at children.

The Dernek Festivals, another favourite family event, take place in various towns and cities, notably Trabzon in the Black Sea region. Families and friends gather for a feast, dancing and lots of traditional music. It is usually held towards the end of July. Visitors, especially those with children, are welcomed at almost any festival or event.

The Troy Festival is held every August at Çanakkale in the Marmara region. Schoolchildren release a white dove from a Trojan Horse – a mighty wooden structure that celebrates the battles with the Trojans at Troy (see p. 90).

What to Pack

Always take plenty of sun cream and hats as the coastal areas and central Anatolia can get extremely hot in the summer months. If staying in the Aegean, Marmara or Mediterranean regions in summertime you will need light cotton clothes for everyone in the family and perhaps a wrap or cardigan for putting over your shoulders in the evening. In

spring and autumn you are likely to need a jumper, and in winter a coat. The other areas can get chilly even in summer so be sure to pack plenty of warmer clothes as well as your beachwear and swimwear. It's a good idea to pack some sun-resistant beachwear for tiny children too. If you are planning to spend lots of time on the beach think about some sort of protection like a shield, umbrella or a tent.

If you're planning to visit mosques or religious buildings during your stay, remember that it is polite to dress modestly. Women should cover shoulders and arms and not wear short skirts or shorts, and men should wear long trousers and a shirt. The same applies to children. Remember, too, to take party clothes for when you attend some of the festivities and special events. Your youngsters will love the chance to dress up.

If you have babies or very young children you will also need to think about things like nappies, baby wipes, nappy cream and special foodstuffs. Most of the major towns and cities have good supermarket facilities so you should be able to find what you need, but take a few things to get you through the first couple of days until you have become orientated. In terms of baby formula food, brands may differ from those your baby is familiar with at home, so it might be a good idea to take some with you. Sterilising bottles shouldn't be a problem if you are staying in self-catering holiday accommodation where you can follow the same principles as you would at home, while hotels in Turkey are almost always helpful to anyone with children and will assist if you need their cooperation to boil water or use a microwave.

Supermarkets in Turkey don't always stock baby food in jars, as it is more traditional to prepare such food in the home. For visiting families this can be a problem, but you should find most restaurants and hotels are only too happy to purée food from the menu for you if needed.

Other things to think about when packing are reins for strapping toddlers into seats in restaurants, and a buggy for when you are out and about. If you are planning to visit historic sites, or even just explore towns where pavements can be damaged, remember surfaces can be uneven so a sturdy buggy is preferable to a lightweight version. If you are hiring a car, always request a car seat and check that it is suitable for the age of your child and that it is undamaged.

Insurance & Health

Travel Insurance

Turkey has few reciprocal agreements with other countries so if you have the unfortunate need for medical treatment while you are in Turkey you will be required to pay for the treatment you receive. For this reason it is essential to have travel and medical insurance. You will need to pay for your

treatment upfront, and claim back your expenses from your insurers. Be sure to keep all receipts and documentation. Make sure when you take out a policy that the insurance covers you for both emergency treatment and repatriation costs, as well as the usual lost baggage and money, and cancellation expenses, although some credit cards will cover these too so, again, it is worth checking before you leave home. Also check that your travel insurance covers you should you need to pull out of a trip before departure, something that can and does happen when travelling with children.

Staying Healthy

Inoculations

Prior to travelling to Turkey it is recommended that you have a few basic inoculations, especially if you are planning to venture into rural areas. Be aware that Bird Flu, or Avian Influenza, has been reported in Turkey. The usual inoculations are polio, typhoid, tetanus and diphtheria, and possibly hepatitis A and B, but always take your doctor's advice, especially if your children are babies or very young.

Staying hydrated

Always drink plenty, especially if you are staying in the Aegean, Mediterranean and inland areas during the hot summer months, as it is easy to get dehydrated. Children always seem to have a preference for fizzy drinks, and although they are good for a certain level of rehydrating and maintaining sugar levels, be sure you and your children take in lots of water. If you are unsure on how much water is enough to keep your babies, toddlers or older children hydrated in Turkey's often extreme temperatures, be sure to take your doctor's advice before you travel. Although tap water is generally safe to drink because it is chlorinated, you may prefer to drink bottled water. Supermarkets, grocery stores and kiosks all sell bottled water cheaply.

Care with fruit, ice cream & ice

Similarly, supermarkets sell fruit, which is generally safe to eat because, in all likelihood, it will have been washed in chlorinated water. However, for extra reassurance and to avoid any stomach upsets, always wash it again before you or your children eat it. Consuming ice cubes or ice creams can be a hazard in all very hot countries. Although ice cubes will probably again have been made with chlorinated water, to be extra safe, try making your own using bottled water. Try to avoid 'homemade' ice cream – it is probably safest to stay with brands, which are readily available, especially in the tourist areas of the Aegean and the Mediterranean, the Marmara region and Istanbul.

Sun protection

Another hazard is the sun. Always wear plenty of high-factor sun protection cream, and if your children like to swim or go

in and out of the sea or pools, be sure the cream is waterproof. Reapply often.

Mosquito protection

Mosquitoes are another hazard. Although unlikely to cause any serious medical problems to anyone other than those allergic to their bites, mosquitoes can be annoying and a repellent should be used. Malaria as a result of experiencing a mosquito bite in Turkey is not regarded a hazard at this time, although of course this can change. The UK Department of Health's free leaflet *Health Advice for Travellers* (*0800 555 7777* or visit **www.hpa.org.uk**) is a good source of information.

Prescribed medication

If you or anyone in your family takes prescribed medication it is wise to take details of the generic name of the medicine as well as the brand name with you in case the brand isn't available, plus a copy of the prescription. This is in case you lose or need to replenish the medication while you are away. Be sure to pack your medication in your hand luggage, not only for your flight but in case your baggage goes missing.

Staying Safe

You will find that Turkish people adore children and it is not uncommon for someone to reach out and pat your child's head. While this can be unnerving, it is unlikely to be a threat. As with any travel, always be sure your children are in sight at all times, especially if visiting crowded places like bazaars. Hold young children's hands tightly or keep them in a buggy. If visiting beaches, always be on your guard against the usual dangers such as a toddler wandering to the sea, and if visiting remote areas always have a good supply of drinks and snacks with you, plus a mobile telephone.

While incidents of crime are relatively low in Turkey, you should be on your guard. Petty crime has been known to occur in crowded places. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (**www.fco.com**) also warns that there is a high risk of terrorist activity in Istanbul and the southeast areas of Turkey, but even the Aegean and Mediterranean areas have been targeted in the past. The FCO states, however, that despite around 1.7 million British tourists alone visiting Turkey a year, most visits are trouble-free so there is no need to panic.

Foreign Commonwealth Office: You can find plenty of advice on the website about safety in each country, what to prepare and also advice on being a responsible tourist. You can also register your trip on the website so that if anything happens while you are away, they can try and locate you. Open Mon–Fri, *020 7008 0210*; out of hours for genuine emergencies, *020 7008 1500, **www.fco.gov.uk***.

If You Need Help

Countrywide numbers

Emergency *112*

Fire service *110*

Municipal police *153*

Police *155*

Traffic police *154*

Most emergency teams speak good English, and most major hospitals have English-speaking doctors. Rural practices or hospitals may not, however. A list of hospitals in Turkey can be found on the British Consulate website (*www.britishembassy.gov.uk*). All hospitals will provide emergency dental treatment as well as dealing with medical emergencies. For minor problems, most pharmacies are run by trained pharmacists who can dispense medicines. Remember you will probably have to pay for any treatment. See Travel Insurance p. 40.

Regional numbers

Antalya
An-Deva Hospital emergency health team *+90 242 312 67 67*
The Antalya Dentist Association, *+90 242 237 52 52*. This can give contact details for dentists throughout the region
Police station *+90 242 227 96 00*

Bodrum
Universal Hospital *+90 252 319 15 15*
Police station *+90 252 316 80 80*

Çeşme
Local hospital *+90 232 712 00 77*
Police station *+90 232 712 66 27*

Fethiye
The state hospital emergency team *+90 242 613 35 48*
Police station *+90 242 614 13 09*

Marmaris
Local hospitals, *+90 252 223 80 40* and *+90 252 413 14 15*
Police station *+90 252 412 18 72*

Staying in Touch

By Phone The cheapest way to make local and international telephone calls in Turkey is from a PTT (*www.ptt.gov.tr*) telephone booth found in towns and cities throughout Turkey, or from post offices. Hotels usually offer direct dial telephones in guestrooms, although making calls can be expensive. Check the rates your hotel charges.

The booths are often busy and you will need to purchase a phonecard (*jetons*). They come in denominations of 30, 60, 100, 120 and 180 YTL, and are available from post offices and many kiosks.

Main post offices are generally open from Mon–Sat 8.30am–12.30pm and 1.30pm–5.30pm, Sun 9am–7pm. Smaller post offices will be open on weekdays only.

Some smaller post offices in tourist areas will open every day. Post offices are easily identified by their PTT or Turk Telekom signage. As well as telephone cards, among the services offered by post offices are fax, sending and receiving letters and money exchange.

To call overseas, first dial 00 for international followed by the country code, followed by the area code and then the private number.

Australia *61*

Canada *1*

Ireland *353*

New Zealand *64*

South Africa *27*

UK *44*

USA *1*

International operator *115*

Directory assistance *118*

To dial Turkey from abroad, the international dialling code is 90. Most phone numbers listed in this guide have the international dialling code for you to dial when using your own mobile phone.

If telephoning within Turkey from a Turkish phone, you will need just the area code with a '0' in front and the private number. For example, if dialling Adana locally, dial 0322 and then the private number. The main area codes are:

Adana *322*
Aksaray *382*
Amasya *358*
Ankara *312*
Antalya *242*
Artvin *466*
Balikesir *266*
Bursa *224*
Çanakkale *286*
Edirne *284*
Fethiye *252*
Giresun *454*
Hatay *326*
Isparta *246*
Istanbul *212*
Izmir *232*
Kastamonu *366*
Kirklareli *288*
Mugla *252*
Ordu *452*
Rize *464*
Samsun *362*
Sinop *368*
Tekirdag *282*
Trabzon *462*
Yalova *226*

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are now widespread in Turkey, with the main operator being Turkcell. If you have international roaming on your mobile phone you should have no problem making and receiving calls and texts. Having a mobile with you is essential if exploring off the beaten track or in one of the large national parks dotted around Turkey with children. You never know when you may need to get help. Always check with your mobile phone provider before you go to ensure you will be able to use it while in Turkey.

Telephoning Turkey

If telephoning Turkey from outside the country you will need to dial 00 for an international connection, followed by 90, the country code, then the area code below and the private number.

Internet Access

Internet access and WiFi is largely confined to hotels offering business services and guestroom connection, although more and more Internet cafes are springing up in the major cities and the tourist areas. Charges in the hotels are usually in line with rates charged to use a guestroom

telephone, but cafés are generally cheaper to use. Cafés and some restaurants in larger cities are also setting up WiFi access while all the major Turkish airports have WiFi.

ACCOMMODATION, EATING OUT & ENTERTAINMENT

Accommodation

Turkey has accommodation to suit most travellers, from holiday complexes with every amenity for families to campsites and city centre business hotels. Even the latter, however, provide amenities for children. In Turkey children are welcomed more or less everywhere. Typically, hotels and complexes will offer playgrounds and children's clubs, private aquaparks, swimming pools specifically for children and tiny tots, special menus in their restaurants and safety and security amenities like high chairs, cots, special children's beds, balcony guards and safety locks. Many provide a welcome pack of books and crayons too. Some of the larger hotels have Internet connections, and discos for older children and teenagers, plus video hire services. Always check with your hotel about the facilities they offer families before booking, and whether they offer any special price packages as some do. Also check the location of your hotel. There are very many hotels and holiday complexes close to city centres and tourist attractions, or in natural parks or in ski areas, but also many that are not. By asking you can make an informed decision about what is best for your family and their preferred holiday activities.

Eating Out

Eating out in Turkey is very much a family affair and dining with children in a restaurant is entirely acceptable. Restaurant owners will be only too willing to provide high chairs or cushions so your tots can eat comfortably. If a high chair with a harness is not available, a set of reins could be used instead for young babies.

Most restaurants will offer a special children's menu, or at least offer smaller portions of dishes on the main menu.

Most menus will feature a meze, a meal of 20 to 25 little dishes of local delicacies, which are brought to your table in a steady stream. Many restaurants will bring a tray of dishes to your table for you to select what you prefer. Typically, there will be dips such as *taramasalata,* variations of *dolma* (stuffed vine leaves), grilled meat, especially chicken or lamb, fish dishes, salads and cooked vegetables. The beauty of a meze is that even if your children are fussy eaters they are sure to find something that will suit their taste – hopefully.

Other dishes on the menu are likely to include soups made with vegetables and yoghurt, in

particular *domates* (tomato) and *mercimek* (lentil), and dishes like *levrek pilakisi,* a hearty stew made from sea bass with onions, potatoes, herbs and spices that will almost inevitably include a substantial amount of garlic; it is likely to be served with rice. *Börek* is another popular dish; made with yoghurt-rich dough stuffed with meat, vegetables or cheese and given its distinctive flavour with herbs, it is often served as part of a meze or as the main ingredient of a meal. *Sigara börek* and *muska börek* are the names given to smaller versions.

For snacks or light meals, Dönar kebabs made with sliced meat, and şiş kebabs, the skewered cube meat type, are popular. Your children may be familiar with Dönar and şiş kebabs from home, although they may taste slightly different as often they are made with more spices. Desserts are mostly milk pudding, fruits such as *karpuz* (water melon) and *kavun* (melon), or pastries made with nuts or fruit and drenched in honey or syrup, such as the commonest known sweet, baklava.

Drinks are usually red or white wines, beers and the local spirit raki, with soft drinks readily available for children. One of the most popular is *vişne,* a tasty cherry drink. Tea, or *çay,* is a popular drink and often comes flavoured. Mint and apple are popular. Tea is drunk in small tulip-shaped glasses or cups with saucers, and always black. Coffee is usually the strong, flavoursome Turkish variety known as *Türk kahvesi* and although delicious can be an acquired taste. Ask for it *sade* (plain), *orta* if you want it with a little sugar, or *şekerli* if you want it very sweet. International coffee can usually be found in the cities and tourist areas.

Entertainment

Be sure to catch some of the traditional forms of entertainment while in Turkey.

Dances

The order of Mevlevi, otherwise known as the **Whirling Dervishes**, perform an age-old dance in traditional dress at shows throughout the country, but in particular the Anatolia region. The dance is accompanied by the military style music of the *mehter takymy* known as a Janissary band, which performs using clarinets, cymbals, kettle drums and the 'reed pipe'. The Whirling Dervishes can trace their origins back to the 13th century when they were founded by Sufimystic, Celaleddin Rumi, also known as Mevlana. Other traditional dances typify parties, festivals or celebrations in the towns and villages. Many areas have their own folk dances. The **horon dance**, for instance, originated in the Black Sea region, the *hora* in the Marmara region and the *halya* dance in the east and southeast.

Music

The type of music usually performed with dances, again, stems from tradition. A combination of Asian, Ottoman and military styles, the music is generally created by a range of instruments that include the violin, the *kanun*, which is very like the zither, drums, oboe, cymbals and the *ud*, which is similar to a lute. In recent years, Turkey has welcomed modern music as well as opera and jazz.

Shadow Puppet Shows

Other forms of entertainment include the **Karagöz** (see p. 90), a Punch and Judy style shadow puppet show, which generally appeals to both adults and children although some storylines border on the satirical.

Sports

Sport events include **Cirit Oyunu**, a team event where horsemen use javelins to score points, and **Kyrkpynar Yagôly Güres** or Greased Wrestling (see p. 95) where teams are smothered in oil and wrestle. Contests are held in June throughout the country.

FAST FACTS: TURKEY

Airports See 'Getting There', p. 33.

Antiquities It is a serious offence to remove antiquities or attempt to take them home with you. You will need to obtain certification in order to export an antique legally. See ***www.kulturturizm.gov.tr*** for more information.

Baby Equipment See 'Accommodation' and 'Eating Out', p. 45.

Babysitters See 'Accommodation' and 'Eating Out', p. 45.

Breastfeeding Turkey is a supporter of breastfeeding, but you will need to be discreet if wishing to breastfeed outside of your accommodation.

Buggies and Wheelchairs Turkey is a very varied country in terms of landscape and many areas are likely to be unsuitable for buggies or for any people in your party who use a wheelchair or have difficulty in walking. The tourist areas in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions are more likely to be suitable, as many attractions, hotels and restaurants specifically make provision for buggy and wheelchair access. Historic sites, buildings such as mosques and nature parks are likely to be unsuitable. The tourist information office has a team who are specifically geared towards advising travellers with disabilities. Visit ***www.gototurkey.co.uk*** or ***www.tourismturkey.org*** to find the office most suited for you to call.

Business Hours Shops throughout Turkey generally open at around 9am to 9.30am through to around 7pm, although many will stay open much longer in tourist areas.

Banks open from 8.30am through to midday and from 1.30pm to 5pm each weekday, although daily in tourist areas. Government offices keep similar hours, although usually closing at 5.30pm. In the hotter Aegean and Mediterranean areas, many offices close for the afternoon in the summer. Main post offices are generally open from 8.30am through to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday and from 9am to 7pm on Sundays, while smaller post offices will be open on weekdays only. Some smaller post offices in tourist areas will open every day.

Car Hire See 'Getting Around', p. 34.

Climate See 'When to Go', p. 38.

Credit Cards See 'Money', p. 37. Always be sure to have the emergency contact numbers of your credit card company with you before you leave in case your cards are lost or stolen. It is also a good idea to notify your credit card company of your visit to Turkey so it is prepared for any unusual spending pattern and does not put a block on your card's use.

Currency See 'Money', p. 37.

Dentists and Doctors Most hotels will be able to give you the telephone number of the nearest dentist or doctor, and some even have doctors on call. For emergency information see 'Insurance and Health – If You Need Help', p. 43.

Documents See 'Passports and Visas' and 'Getting Around', p. 36 and p. 34.

Drinking Laws The separation of mosque and state in Turkey ensures that the consumption of alcohol remain a personal choice. However, the pendulum of tolerance for those who drink has swung back under the current government led by Erdogan. Taxes on imported wines and spirits went through the roof, creating a financial disincentive for anyone with a hankering for a vodka tonic (for example). Furthermore, many government-owned establishments (restaurants operated by a municipality, for example) and those establishments owned by hard-core conservatives simply do not serve alcohol. (In a compromise, Hünkar Lokantasi, the famous Istanbul restaurant, only serves alcohol to foreigners.)

Practically speaking, the legal age for purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages is 18, although people under the age of 18 can drink (non-distilled beverages only) when accompanied by a parent. Beer, wine, and spirits are widely available for purchase. Also, although winemaking was historically an activity pursued by non-Muslim natives of Anatolia, the shift to wine production by the Turks began shortly after the establishment of the Republic, and in the past few years, Turkish wines have continued to surprise (and impress).

Driving Rules See 'Getting Around', p. 34.

Eating Out See 'Eating Out', p. 45.

Electricity Electricity in Turkey runs on 220 volts AC all over the country, with plugs being the two-round-pin variety. If you are travelling from the UK and some other destinations such as Ireland you will find it necessary to purchase an adaptor.

Embassies and High Commissions There are embassies and High Commissions for most countries in the major towns and cities of Turkey. The British Government (*www.britishembassy.org.tr*), for instance, has representative offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Antalya, Bodrum, Bursa and Marmaris. Always check with the embassy in your country of departure about their contact details in Turkey before you travel. **Embassies in Ankara – United States** Atatürk Bulv. 110, Kavaklidere (*+90 312 455 55 55*); **Canada**, Cinnah Cad. 58, Çankaya (*+90 312 409 27 00*); **United Kingdom**, Sehit Ersan Cad. 46/A, Çankaya (*+90 312 455 33 44*); **Australia**, Ugur Mumcu Caddesi 88/7, Gaziosmanpasa (*+90 312 459 95 00*); **New Zealand**, Iran Cad. 13/4, Kavaklidere (*+90 312 467 90 54*).

Consulates in Istanbul - United States, Istinye Mahallesi, Kaplicalar Mevkii 2 (*+90 212 335 90 00*); **Canada**, Istiklal Caddesi 373/5 (*+90 212 251 98 38*); **United Kingdom**, 34 Mesrutiyet Cad, Tepebasi (*+90 212 33 65 00*); **Australia**, AskerocagI Caddesi 15, Sisli (*+90 212 243 13 33*).

Emergencies If you experience an emergency while in your hotel the best thing to do is contact the reception desk immediately. Hotel staff are generally trained to deal with such problems.
Emergency *112*
Police *155*
Traffic police *154*
Fire service *110*
Local municipality police *153*
International operator *118*

Etiquette Turkey is a country that regards its mosques as important places of worship. It is tolerant of visitors, however, and you will generally have no problem with visiting any mosque, although it is best to avoid visiting during prayer times if possible. These occur five times a day and last for around half an hour. You will be advised at the entrance if the mosque is closed for prayer. On entering a mosque, you will be required to remove your shoes and cover your arms and shoulders, and in some cases your legs if wearing a short skirt or shorts. Many mosques provide an overall for you to wear. Children are welcomed, but try to keep them as quiet as possible so they do not disturb those at private prayer.

You should always show respect to Atatürk, the flag of Turkey and to its currency. The latter, for example, should not be defaced. You should also respect the wish of Turkish women to wear veils or to cover their heads. It is not compulsory, but a personal choice, although it is accepted that visitors will not necessarily choose to do the same.

Health Always check with your doctor for the latest vaccination recommendations for travel to Turkey (see also p. 41), especially if venturing away from cities like Istanbul or Ankara, or the main tourist hotspots and into rural areas. Water is generally safe for brushing teeth and to drink although you may prefer to drink bottled water. It is readily available and inexpensive. The city's private hospitals and dentists are generally good, with emergency appointments and treatments available. See 'Insurance and Health', p. 40.

Holidays See 'When to Go – Public Holidays and Special Events', p. 38.

Internet Access See 'Staying in Touch', p. 43.

Legal Aid and Advice Always consult your embassy or consulate, p. 48.

Lost Property If you have lost important documents like your passport or driving licence during your time in Turkey, go straight to your embassy or consulate. For all other items go to the nearest police station to where you thought you last had the missing item. See Embassies & Consulates p. 48.

Mail See 'Staying in Touch', p. 43.

Maps The Aegean, Mediterranean and Marmara regions, as well as Istanbul and Ankara, are relatively easy to find your way around and they are all well served by the tourist information network. The offices generally have a helpful team of locals who will readily supply you with local street maps. The Turkey Tourist Map published by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism and available in the offices is especially good if you plan to travel further afield. The Internet is a good source of maps to study prior to your visit. Try Google or Stanford's map store.

Money See 'Money', p. 37.

Museums There are museums in most towns and all the cities. They are generally open every day except Mondays, with the exception being Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, which is open every day except Tuesday, and the Dolmabahçe Palace, also in Istanbul, which is closed on Mondays and Thursdays. Visit ***www.kulturturizm.gov.tr*** for more information.

Newspapers and Magazines Foreign newspapers and a good selection of 'what's on' style magazines in English are generally available in the larger cities and in tourist areas.

Pharmacies See 'Insurance and Health – If You Need Help', p. 43.

Police See 'If You Need Help', p. 43.

Post Offices The PTT (post office), hard to miss with its black and yellow signs, offers the usual postal services, in addition to selling tokens *(jeton)* and phone cards for the phone booths located in and around the

post office and in most public places. **Postcards cost 50YKr to Europe and 95YKr to all other continents.** The PTT also has currency exchange and traveller's cheque services; in major tourist areas PTT kiosks are strategically located for emergency money needs. For express deliveries or shipping packages, the PTT operates an *acele posta servisi* (or APS), but for your own sense of security, you'd better stick with the old reliable UPS or DHL. See also 'Staying in Touch', p. 43.

Religion Turkey is predominantly Muslim, although the right to choose one's own religion is respected. There are mosques, churches and synagogues throughout the country. Muslim call to prayer is five times a day and Sunday is regarded as the weekly holiday. There are religious festivals in Turkey, including Seker Bayramy in October, Kurban Bayramy (the Feast of Sacrifice) which is held around January, and Ramadan, or *Ramazan*, when locals will fast from sunrise to sunset. The exact dates of festivals change every year. You will see many women wearing headscarves or full veils. This is not compulsory but a personal choice. Visitors are not expected to follow suit, but if visiting religious places, especially mosques, then you should cover up, including arms and legs, and remove shoes. You may carry your shoes. Some mosques in tourist areas provide overalls or cloaks to cover unsuitably dressed visitors. Mosques are generally closed to visitors during prayer times, although in the main tourist areas some do open. It is expected that you should keep children as quiet as possible if visiting a religious building.

Smoking A local saying goes something like this: 'Eat like a Turk, smoke like a Turk,' which roughly translates to 'If you're a non-smoker, tough luck.' In theory, smoking is prohibited on public transportation, in cinemas, in airports and the like. But realising the hardships of driving a bus, bus companies allow the drivers to smoke.

Souvenirs The most popular smaller souvenirs to take home are Turkish Delight, the jelly sweet covered in fine sugar, and beads or trinkets decorated with the 'Evil Eye'. They are usually blue in colour, and traditionally worn as a brooch for example, to ward off the envy of others. Other souvenirs are carpets made of cotton, wool or silk, brightly coloured ceramics and Iznik tiles (see p. 108). If buying an expensive item always keep the receipt to show customs officers. See 'Customs – Arriving in Turkey and Going Home', p. 36.

Taxes The value-added tax (VAT or sales tax) in Turkey is called the KDV; in 2008, the Turkish government is cutting taxes charged to the tourism sector by 10%, from 18% to 8%. Don't expect to see this rebate hit your wallet anytime soon: it's unlikely that hotel rates will

adjust downward to reflect this change. Meanwhile, alcohol is now taxed (by alcoholic content) at a rate that could make even an alcoholic think twice before ordering a drink. Stick to Turkish brands (or drink raki rather than white wine), and if you're going to splurge in a wine shop, ask the store owner to provide you with the special VAT Refund Invoice, which must then be validated at the Customs Office at the airport prior to departure.

Taxis See 'Getting Around', p. 34.

Telephone and Area Codes See 'Staying in Touch' p. 43.

Time Zone In the summer months Turkey is GMT plus two hours.

Tipping Indispensable as a supplement to an already low wage, gratuities are a way of life in Turkey and are often expected for even the most minor service. Try to keep small notes handy and follow these guidelines: Give the **bellhop** 50 kuruş to 1YTL (45¢–87¢/20p–40p) per bag; leave at least an additional 10% of the restaurant bill for your **waiter;** reward your **tour guide** with €10 to €20 ($15–$29/£7.15–£14) for a job well done; thank the **captain** of your gulet with about €50; and give the **attendant** in the Turkish bath €3 to €5 ($4.35–$7.25/ £2.15–£3.55) *before* the rubdown. Shows of appreciation are also expected from your **chambermaid,** your **barber** or **hairdresser,** and an **usher** who has shown you to your seat.

Toilets and Babychanging You are likely to find few public toilet facilities if exploring the rural areas of Turkey. They tend to be provided in the centre of the larger towns and cities only, along with highways where they are usually modern and to a high standard. It is always advisable to use the facilities of restaurants or picnic areas when you stop for refreshments. *Bay* is for men, *bayan* for women. Always carry toilet paper with you as it is not always provided.

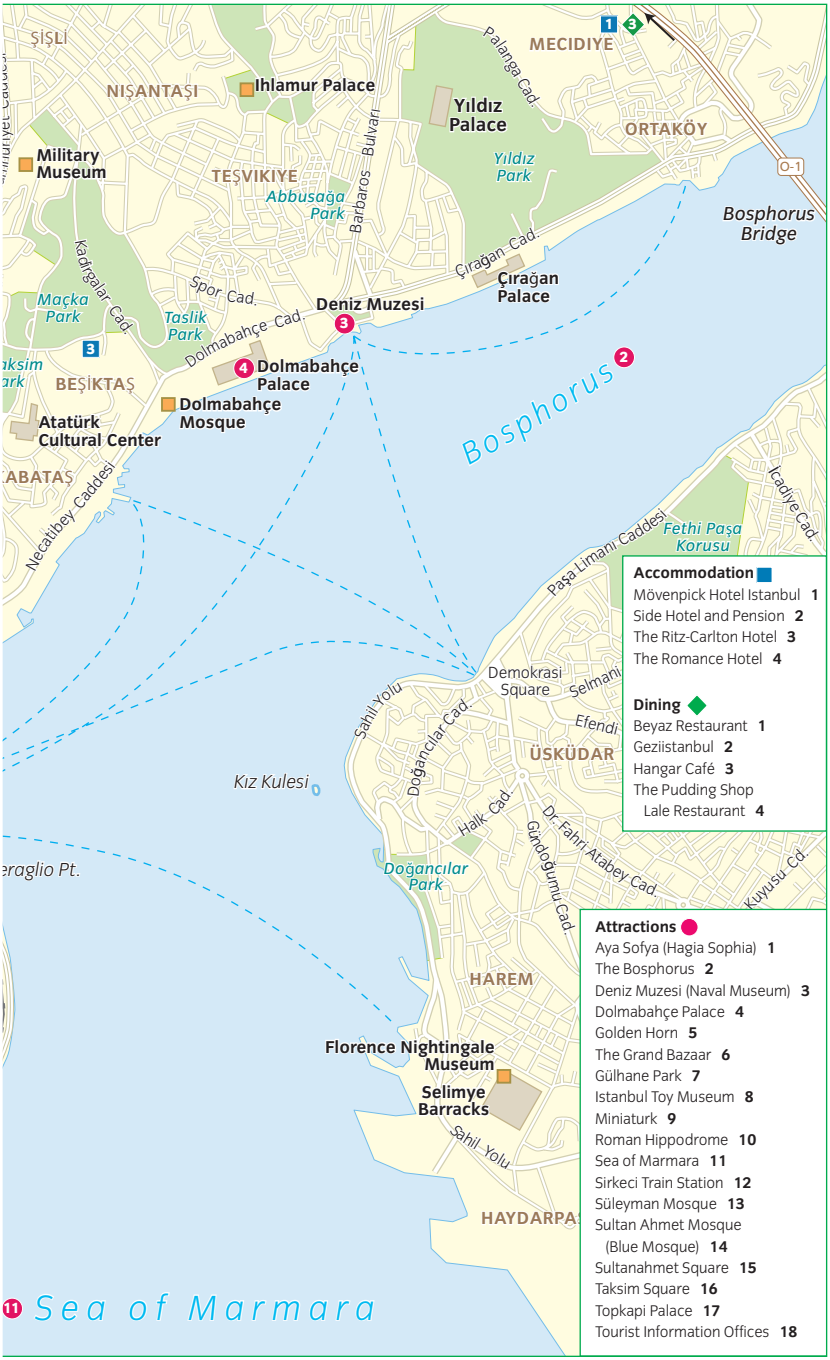
Turkish Baths The tradition of taking a Turkish bath dates back to medieval times, with both men and women enjoying the chance to socialise while at the same time cleansing their bodies. Cleanliness is considered essential in Turkish and Islamic culture. Men and women always bathe separately, either in different hammams or at different times, with the exception being in tourist spas. The practice may not be suitable for children.

Water Tap water is chlorinated in Turkey, making it safe to drink. However, to avoid an upset stomach it is probably best to drink bottled water, which is available cheaply from supermarkets and most kiosks. You may even see street traders selling it in tourist areas. Of course, always check that the seal is unbroken before purchase. In restaurants always check that the seal on a bottle of water brought to your table is undamaged.

3 Istanbul

ISTANBUL

9 Miniaturk
SÜLTÜCE
Karağaç Cad.
O-1
Haliç Bridge
HALICIOĞLU
Kumbarahane Cad.
Fatih Sultan Mimberi Cad.
Piyalepaşa Bulvarı
Feriköy Mezarlığı
Kurtuluş Caddesi
Dolapdere Cad.
KURTULUŞ
HARBIY
HASKÖY
Istanbul Toy Museum
8
Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum
İmak Cd.
GALATASARAY
16
2 Taksi Squar
Kasımpaşa
Kulaksız Mezarlığı
Tarlabaşı Bulvarı
İstiklal Cad.
KASIMPAŞA
Haskoy Yolu
Bahriye Cad.
BEYOĞLU
Sıraselviler Cad.
Ayvansaray Cad.
BALAT
5 Golden Horn (Haliç)
Tepebaşı Park
Yeni Çarşı Cad.
St. Savior in Chora
Hasan Paşa Park
EDIRNEKAPI
FENER
Selim I Mosque
Abdulezelpaşa Cad.
TOPHAN
Nusretiye Mosque
GALATA
Galata Tower
Museum of Modern Art
Atatürk Bridge
Yavuz Selim Cad.
FATİH
KARAKÖY
Jewish Museum
Akşemsettin Cad.
KÜÇÜKPAZAR
Galata Bridge
Fevzi Paşa Caddesi
Akdeniz Cad.
Fatih Mosque
Atatürk Bulvarı
Valens Aqueduct
New Queen Mother's Mosque
13 Süleyman Mosque
EMİNÖNÜ
Kennedy Cad.
12 Sirkeci Train Station
Arkeoloji Park
ŞEHZADEBAŞI
Şehzade Mosque
Şehzadebaşı Cad.
(Vatan Caddesi)
AKSARAY
CAĞALOĞLU
4
17 Topkap Palace
Istanbul University
BEYAZIT
Turgut Özal Caddesi
LALELI
Laleli Mosque
Ordu Cad.
6 Grand Bazaar
Gülhane Park
7
Beyazıt Mosque
Yeniçeriler Cad.
Hagia Irene
Mustafa Kemal Bul.
Koca Mustafapaşa Cad.
Namık Kemal Cad.
Divan Yolu
1 Aya Sofya
15
Türkeli Caddesi
Gedikpaşa Cad.
Roman Hippodrome
10
2
Sultan Ahmet Mosque
14
CERRAHPAŞA
YENIKAPI
Yenikapı
KUMKAPI
Samatya Cad.
Kumkapı
SULTANAHMET
Kennedy Caddesi
Cankurtara
0 1/4 mi
0 0.25 km



Accommodation
Mövenpick Hotel Istanbul 1
Side Hotel and Pension 2
The Ritz-Carlton Hotel 3
The Romance Hotel 4

Dining
Beyaz Restaurant 1
Geziistanbul 2
Hangar Café 3
The Pudding Shop Lale Restaurant 4

Attractions
Aya Sofya (Hagia Sophia) 1
The Bosphorus 2
Deniz Muzesi (Naval Museum) 3
Dolmabahçe Palace 4
Golden Horn 5
The Grand Bazaar 6
Gülhane Park 7
Istanbul Toy Museum 8
Miniaturk 9
Roman Hippodrome 10
Sea of Marmara 11
Sirkeci Train Station 12
Süleyman Mosque 13
Sultan Ahmet Mosque (Blue Mosque) 14
Sultanahmet Square 15
Taksim Square 16
Topkapi Palace 17
Tourist Information Offices 18

Istanbul is a heaving metropolis, a city with a European feel mixed with an Asian twist. Tourist office guides will tell you it is right at the point where the West meets the East, which is really rather how it feels. A curious mix but it works a treat. In terms of a family holiday it means the experience of visiting Istanbul – which as the great and rich city of Constantinople was at the heart of the Byzantine Empire for nearly a thousand years from AD500–1500 and later became the capital of the Ottoman Empire – will be startlingly different from most European breaks.

A gentle walk around the city's Sultanahmet area or its Bazaar Quarter, and seeing countless tiny streets, grand mosques, museums and palaces, will be a little like walking through a history book.

'Must-do' activities include taking a boat ride along the Bosphorus, with great buildings such as the Suleymaniye Mosque and the fabulously opulent Dolmabahçe Palace lining the cruise's route.

Children are perfectly catered for with the sights of Turkey all in miniature at Miniaturk Park, just to the north of the city, while Feshane Children's Entertainment Park has been specially designed with rides and attractions that will keep the younger members of the family amused for hours.

To get a feel for the history of the city, stop awhile at the Topkapi Palace and see its priceless collection of jewels, or visit one of the city's grand mosques. For something completely different visit the Grand Bazaar, where huge fun can be had watching shopkeepers and buyers trying relentlessly to agree a price. The gloomy underground cistern in the Sultanahmet is one of the more unusual tourist attractions in the city and a great place to hear your own voice echo back to you.

Istanbul, like the whole of Turkey, is child-friendly in terms of facilities and most hotels have facilities like playgrounds and babysitting services. Restaurants and cafes, too, usually offer children's menus with a selection of ice creams and drinks, while eating out in the city can be a cosmopolitan affair with eateries serving everything from French and Spanish cuisine, American-style burgers, spicy Asian food and Oriental dishes that should suit even the most discerning young palate.

ESSENTIALS

Getting There

By Plane The easiest way to get to Istanbul is by air. It's quick, usually quite inexpensive and by far the most stress-free means of travelling from the US, UK and other parts of Europe with a lively family in tow. Major airlines such as **British Airways, Lufthansa, KLM** and **Austrian Airlines** (see p. 34) fly into the city on a daily basis, with many others offering a regular service. Some package tour companies, too, feature Istanbul in their itineraries.

The first glimpse of Istanbul is likely to be through the window of a plane coming into **Atatürk Havalimani International Airport** (see p. 34) with the sprawl of the city in one direction and the Sea of Marmara in the other. The airport is around 25kms (about 15 miles) from the city centre.

Buses found right outside run into the city every 30 minutes or so and take about 45 minutes. Their journey ends at Taksim Square, in the heart of Istanbul. The cost per person is around 10 YTL (Turkish Lira).

A **light railway system** also travels from the airport into the Aksaray area of the city for connections to other districts, such as the Sultanahmet. Cost-wise, it's on a par with the buses.

Taxis cost little more than double the price for a bus, so are perfect for a quick transfer for a whole family. You can hail a bright orange taxi from right outside the arrivals terminal

Sabiha Gokcen (*www.sgairport.com*) is the city's other, smaller airport. Located in the Asiatic area of the city, domestic flights come and go from here. It is used mainly by smaller airlines providing internal flights. Journey time by taxi into the centre is about the same. Ditto the cost. Unfortunately there is no direct transport link between the airports, so if you have an onward journey it is best to travel to Taksim Square and take a bus to whichever airport you are heading for.

By Road and Rail The three largest bus companies are: **Kâmil Koç**, Istanbul: *+90 212 658 20 00*; Bursa: *+90 242 261 50 00* **Ulusoy**, Istanbul: *+90 212 471 71 00*, *www.ulusoy.com.tr* **Varan**, Istanbul: *+90 212 251 74 74*, *www.varan.com.tr*)

Train services are operated by the **Turkish State Railway (TCDD**, *www.tcdd.gov.tr*). Trains arrive at **Sirkeci Station**, right in the heart of the city at Eminönü, location of the Bosphorus cruise trips, in a constant stream of activity from cities around Europe.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Tourist Information Offices

Istanbul offers so much for visitors to see and do, from historic monuments such as the grandiose Topkapi Palace to experiences like shopping for trinkets in the Grand Bazaar or in streets teeming with people. Knowing where to start can be a bit daunting. The answer is a sharpish visit to the tourist office, where the staff members are friendly, helpful and have a seemingly endless number of leaflets and booklets at their fingertips. There is one tourist office in the arrivals hall of the main Atatürk Havalimani airport, further offices in the Elmadag and Beyazit areas, and at the maritime passenger terminal in Karakoy. The Sultanahmet Tourism Information Office in the Sultanahmet district is central

when visiting the main sights of the city.

Atatürk Havalimani International Airport
Arrivals Hall, *+90 212 663 07 98*

Beyazit
Hurriyet Meydani, Beyazit Square, *+90 212 522 49 02*

Elmadag
Cumhuriyet Cassesi, *+90 212 511 58 88*

Karakoy
International Maritime Passenger Terminal, *+90 212 249 57 76*

Sultanahmet
Divan Yolu Caddesi (near the Hippodrome), *+90 212 511 58 88*

Useful websites for tourists:

www.gototurkey.co.uk

www.tourismturkey.org

www.istanbulcityguide.com

http://english.istanbul.com

Orientation

Istanbul is roughly divided into districts such as the Bazaar Quarter, the Asiatic Quarter and the Sultanahmet, which makes it easier to get to grips with the layout of the city and to plan a day of chosen activities. For example, if you plan to spend the day visiting the great mosques and buildings of the city, then head for the Sultanahmet where most of them are located conveniently within a short walk of each other. The bonus is that if you are planning to spend just a few days in the city before heading to another destination in Turkey, you can identify which area to make a beeline for to see the key sights in the shortest time. From Istanbul it is relatively straightforward to travel to other parts of Turkey by air from Sabiha Gokcen airport or for shorter journeys by bus from Taksim Square.

Getting Around

To see the main sights of the city it's a good idea to hop on a sightseeing bus. Painted bright red with colourful cartoon-style images of identifiable buildings, the City Sightseeing Istanbul (see p. 76) buses are by far the most popular. The commentary is available in English. They are fun for the children, but actually rather entertaining for mums and dads too.

For everyday travels there are two **bus networks** run by **IETT** and **Halk Otobus**. Bus stops have timetables and destination information. Tourist information offices (see p. 57) have some good leaflets on the bus routes with current times and fares. Istanbul also has an **underground metro** system, **Tunel**, and a tram network that largely serves the museums and main attractions radiating from Taksim Square. Prices for buses, metro and trams are inexpensive, starting from around 2 YTL per journey.

Taxis operate in large numbers around the city. They can be hailed on the street, called from

hotels or attractions by telephone or from the many taxi ranks dotted about the city, such as the large one at the train station. You can't mistake the taxis; in the city centre they are painted bright yellow, while airport taxis are orange and in the outer areas they are a more calming lilac.

Another form of taxi is the **dolmuş**, a type of minibus that will depart when it is full and stop wherever anyone requests it to. While they are the cheapest form of transport around the city, can be seen everywhere and are used by locals, they are, by their nature, a tad unreliable. Uncomfortable, too, as they will almost always be crowded and in the summer heat they are a challenge even without accompanying children. Probably one to miss unless your children share your adventurous spirit and you want to experience 'real' daily life in Istanbul.

One thing you will almost certainly not want to do though is drive. Istanbul is a manic city of 14 million residents, and it seems they are all out on the streets and roads at the same time. As the public transport system is so expansive, inexpensive and in most cases reliable, it is probably unwise to attempt driving a car.

Commuter ferries and seabuses (*deniz otobüsü*) ferry passengers across the Bosphorus between Europe and Asia, as well as to the nearby Princes' Islands (see p. 67). Some of the more useful crossings are between Eminönü and Kadiköy; Eminönü and Karaköy; Karaköy and Kadiköy; Besiktas and Üsküdar; Besiktas and Kadiköy; and Karaköy and Haydarpasa. Long-distance ferries or the faster seabuses are operated by **Istanbul Deniz Otobüsleri** (*+90 212 516 12 12 www.ido.com.tr*). You can use your Akbil electronic transit pass to ride the sea buses.

PLANNING YOUR OUTINGS

If travelling further afield, the city's metro runs from Taksim Square to Levent and from Aksaray to Otogar in Esenler, where buses will take you to nearby towns or to the airport for domestic flights. The tourist information offices (see p. 57) are also on hand to help if you are planning an excursion or extending your stay in Turkey. The staff are hugely helpful and speak good English.

INSIDER TIP

Buy an **Akbil** transit pass, available from **Akbil** kiosks at the entrances to most metro and light railway stations, and tram stations. You can put as much money as you wish onto the chip and it gives you discounted travel around the city on all transport including seabuses.

FAST FACTS

Opening Hours Shopping hours in Istanbul are generally Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm, although some may stay

open later. Banks keep similar hours, although tend to open a half hour or so earlier in the morning. Museums open daily from around 8.30am to 6pm, although some may close for lunch.

Post Offices (PTT) The main post office in Istanbul, marked with a big PTT sign, is located at Eminönü, close to the ferry terminal where boats leave for a trip along the Bosphorus. Smaller post offices, again with a PTT sign, are dotted about everywhere. See ***www.ptt.gov.tr*** for up-to-the-minute rates for letters and parcels.

Toilets Istanbul has a great many public toilets, marked *Bay* for men and *Bayan* for women. However, it is advisable to use facilities in restaurants and hotels as the public toilets are often dirty and rarely have toilet paper provided. Occasionally, an attendant on duty will take a small fee and offer paper at the entrance door.

WHAT TO SEE & DO

Children's Top 10 Attractions

1 **Climbing** on board the Miniaturk Express at Miniaturk and seeing Istanbul in miniature. See p. 68

2 **Seeing** Istanbul from the top of an open-top double-decker bus. See p. 76

3 **Enjoying** an ice cream at Buzada Beach on Galatasaray Island. See p. 49

4 **Hearing** your own voice in the underground chambers of the Sultanahmet cistern. See p. 72

City Sightseeing, Istanbul

5 **Taking** a horse-drawn carriage on Buyuk Ada, the largest of the Princes' Islands. See p. 67

6 **Laughing** out loud at the toy soldiers with their smiling faces in the Toy Museum. See p. 74

7 **Cycling** around the winding pathways of the Röne Park. See p. 69

8 **Learning** to haggle in the Grand Bazaar and securing a trinket to take home. See p. 64

9 **Studying** the tiny glass buildings in the Istanbul Crystals Museum. See p. 75

10 **Sailing** the waters of the Bosphorus and seeing fortresses just waiting to be explored. See p. 76

INSIDER TIP

Visitors are free to visit any mosque, but shoes should be removed and bare shoulders covered before entering as a sign of respect. Prayer sessions are held five times a day, and you may find a mosque closed during these times. Although it is acceptable to visit if people are at private prayer, discretion should be observed. Children should be kept as quiet as possible. If you are doubtful of their behaviour perhaps it would be wise not to visit.

Child-friendly Events & Entertainment

Children's Summer Festival ★★★ VALUE ALL AGES

Schools as well as associations around the city join forces to host numerous festivals and events aimed specifically at children during the summer months in the **Feshane Children's Entertainment Park** (see p. 68). There are fairs with fairground-style rides and games, competitions and charity events. The park, a large space with lots of leisure amenities such as jogging routes and courts for ball games, can be found off the Golden Horn at Eyüp. On crisp spring mornings and throughout the day during the summer months and at weekends, the park is a magnet for families keen to escape the city hustle and bustle and relax awhile.

Summer months. Off the Golden Horn, Eyup *+90 212 663 07 93.*

International Children's Day ★★★ ALL AGES

Like the rest of Turkey, Istanbul is geared up for families. Children are recognised as being the future of the country, a thought that prompted Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, to declare 23rd April International Children's Day. Recognised by UNICEF, it is now a national holiday and observed by other countries around the world. Every year a week-long programme of events such as exhibitions, festivals and ceremonies with a cast of thousands is held throughout the city. Schools organise events, and pupils often participate in the unusual initiative to replace high-ranking government officials from the President, Prime Minister and governors downwards. In turn, they debate and put forward

proposals on issues that concern children. On 23rd April itself, children participate in the Grand National Assembly sessions.

23 April. +90 212 663 07 93.

International Film Festival and the International Istanbul Theatre Festival ALL AGES

Two of the city's major events of the year, the Film Festival and the Theatre Festival are held at selective venues throughout the city, including the large and modern **Atatürk Cultural Centre** near Taksim Square. They take place every April and May respectively. Although popular with adults and visitors, they generally include programmes of films and events especially for children. Try to arrange your trip to coincide with the festivals; it will be worthwhile.

April and May. +90 212 663 07 98.

International Istanbul Music and Dance Festival ALL AGES

Every June, the city comes alive to the sound of music and dance. Venues, including a number of museums, hotels and community centres, host events from international artists. The tourist information offices (see p. 57) always have publicity materials detailing where and when events are to be held. The most convenient office is likely to be at the Sultanahmet. It's in Divan Yolu Caddesi, a few minutes walk away from the Hippodrome.

June. Venues throughout the city.

Istanbul Toy Museum Workshops ★★★ VALUE ALL AGES

A series of workshops is held weekly at the Toy Museum (see p. 79), covering subjects such as archaeology, which is explained through the use of sand boxes and drawings, and therefore makes it easier for children to learn. Each workshop is tailored to an age group. A more basic, easy-to-understand workshop is provided for young children up to the age of 6, while the more advanced lessons are aimed at those up to 11 years of age. Both residents of the city and visitors are welcomed.

Ömerpaşa Avenue Dr. Zeki Zeren Street No:17, Goztepe, Istanbul +90 216 359 45 50; www.istanbuloyuncakmusesi.com

Spirit of Anatolia ALL AGES

A show by the Istanbul Dance Ensemble and held at the **Turkish Cultural Dance Theatre** around three times a week (variable depending on the season), this spectacular presentation offers great music, dance and colourful costumes. Traditional dances, such as the Whirling Dervishes from Konya, Halay from the south east region of Turkey, the Artvin Dance from the North-east, the Thrace Dance from Kirklareli and the Horon from the Black Sea region are just some of the dances performed for visitors of all ages. The theatre is just a few minutes' walk from the Grand Bazaar.

All year. Turkish Cultural Dance Theatre, Divan Yolu Cad. +90 212 517 46 98.

Sugar Festival ALL AGES

The *Seker Bayrami* (Sugar Festival) is a three-day music and dance event held to mark the end of Ramadan. Hotels and restaurants throughout the city have special menus to celebrate the end of the 11 days of fasting. All tourist information offices (see p. 57) hold details of the venues participating in the festival.

End of Ramadan. Hotels and restaurants throughout the city.

Main Tourist Areas of Istanbul

Sultanahmet Square

At the very heart of Istanbul, Sultanahmet Square is a large, leafy area of gardens and avenues that is most notable for being the home of five of the city's most outstanding 'must-see' landmarks: the **Sultan Ahmet Camii** (the Blue Mosque) (see p. 71), the **Aya Sofya** (Haghia Sophia) (see p. 69), **Topkapi Sarayi** (Topkapi Palace) (see p. 72), the **Yerebatan Sarayi** (the Basilica Cistern) (see p. 72) and the site of the ancient **Hippodrome stadium** (see p. 70). It is, therefore, a good place to start exploring the city, and with a few good child-friendly hotels (see p. 78) in the area, it's an ideal place to make your base too. Near the great monuments are several museums, such as the **Archaeological Museum** (see p. 73), plus close by is the **Istanbul Crafts Centre** (see p. 75). For a break, stop awhile in **Gulhane Park** (see p. 68), in front of the Blue Mosque, where seats are provided. Sitting here quietly will give you a chance to appreciate the lively atmosphere of this exciting city.

Taksim Square

The square itself is a modern space full of people on the move. It is also the hub of the transport system in this part of the city. The

Sultanahmet Square

Atatürk Cultural Centre, home to various festivals of music, dance and theatre, dominates the area, while the nearby **Yildiz Parki** is popular with locals and visitors alike. A large green park full of lakes and pavilions, it is a great place to visit for a walk, jog or to let the youngsters let off some steam. A short walk away – or hop on a city sightseeing tour or bus – is the great **Dolmabahçe Palace** (see p. 70), which lies on the banks of the Bosphorus. See the unmoving uniformed guard at the entrance. Your little ones will be sure to want their photograph taken beside him. Along the river at **Ortakoy**, once a small fishing harbour and now a major intersection of shops and restaurants, are the **Military Museum** and the **Naval Museum** (see p. 73).

The Grand Bazaar

The **Süleymaniye Mosque** (see p. 71) and the **Galata Bridge** dominate the skyline of the Grand Bazaar (see p. 64) district, but it is the 4,000 or so shopkeepers, all vying for trade and encouraging you to haggle, that give it its unique atmosphere. The **Book Bazaar** and the **Spice Bazaar**, the latter a short walk away from the Eminönü ferry terminal and tram stop, are two of the notable areas within the bazaar district. However, it isn't only books and spices to be found here. In fact, you'll see everything from local crafts and leatherware to jewellery. The Grand Bazaar itself is a labyrinth of alleyways, bursting with colour from the lamps, ceramics, clothing and beads that are displayed at every turn. A trip around this area of Istanbul will become a memory that will last forever. Don't forget to visit **Sirkeci Station** (see p. 57), too, if you're not already travelling through it. Not only does it display the interior-design concept of a bygone era, but has a

The Grand Bazaar

splendid museum telling the story of the **Orient Express**, a one-time visitor to the city.

INSIDER TIP

Be sure to keep hold of your children's hands when exploring the Grand Bazaar. It is a maze of tiny streets with people in their hundreds.

Best Beaches

Buzada Beach ★

Offering a sandy beach along with numerous facilities such as an Olympic-sized swimming pool and terraces, the Buzada Beach is on Galatasaray Island, just off the quayside at Kurucesme. There's also a beach cafe which is child-friendly and serves a menu for smaller appetites as well as milk shakes and ice creams, along with two traditional restaurants for evening dining. The short boat ride from the quayside is all part of the experience.

Dalia Beach

A popular beach with Istanbul residents as well as visitors, the Dalia Beach runs along the shoreline on the European side of the Bosphorus at Demirciköy, Sarıyer. Part of a secure complex that has leisure amenities and restaurants, the especially clean beach is only accessible from around 8am every morning through to late. It's a handy place for the children to let off some steam in the sand.

Golden Beach

Located at Marmarcik Cove, a few kilometres outside Istanbul city centre in the village of Rumeli Feneri, and on the Bosphorus almost where it meets the Black Sea, the Golden Beach is within a holiday centre that provides accommodation, restaurants and cafés, and lots of leisure facilities. You'll find it's a good place to stop and refresh. You can also take the family on a cycling expedition as special routes are mapped out, or you can head off into the village itself and take a look at the lighthouse and remains of a castle that once stood at the spot.

Kamo's Beach ★

Located at Kinaliada, one of the Princes' Islands, this lovely sandy beach is popular because it is easy to get to from the city centre by boat (see p. 59) and offers you the chance to explore for a few hours and then relax on the sand when the children need a break. It can get a bit busy though. There's a swimming pool, several ice cream parlour-style eateries and a large child-friendly restaurant close-by too.

Solar Beach

This beach is ideal if you have older children or teenagers as there's so much happening, but it may be all too much for tiny tots. Everything from basketball, soccer and go-karting to rollerboarding, windsurfing and jet skiing is offered here, all in an atmosphere of loud music and fast food. The Solar Beach is at Kilyos, a short drive from the city centre at the point where the Bosphorus joins the Black Sea.

Sea of Marmara

Natural Wonders & Spectacular Views

Golden Horn

The Golden Horn is the stretch of water that splits off from the Bosphorus and runs inland under the Galata Bridge and Atatürk Bridge to the Jewish areas of the city. Here, pleasure craft can be seen bobbing on the water, joggers in the green riverside areas can be seen at all hours of the day and a series of children's playgrounds ensure it is a 'must' to visit during your stay. Not far from here are the remains of the old city walls. Older children will love the chance to explore them, although be on your guard to avoid accidents as they can be uneven in places. In fact, not all areas are accessible. It is probably best to stop really young children from attempting to explore as they could easily lose their footing.

Marmara Island ★

Marmara Island is in the Sea of Marmara to the south of Istanbul and can be reached by boat (see p. 59) although the journey time can take a few hours. Unspoilt and famed for its marble, it is ideal as a break from the hustle and bustle of the city. Take a picnic, baby-changing equipment, a buggy and perhaps even a change of clothes for your little ones as the island has few facilities and, if going for the day, realistically it will be several hours before you return.

Sea of Marmara

An inland sea of around 11,500sq. km in size and lying to the south of the European side of Istanbul, the Sea of Marmara links the Aegean Sea with the Black Sea via the Bosphorus strait. It has a collection of islands, the Princes' Islands (see p. 67), and the Marmara Island (see above) which is famed for its

The view from the Bosphorus

marble. Stop awhile at Yenikapi and Kumkapi on the mainland and see all the boats coming in with their catches, and then look at all the fish, everything from sardines through to snappers, sole, lobsters, sea bass and tuna, on display in the nearby fish market. There are a few good restaurants around this part of Istanbul, too, specialising, of course, in fish.

The Bosphorus ★★

A long – around 30km – and especially wide stretch of water, the Bosphorus divides Istanbul in half. One side is the European Istanbul, while the other is Asian. It has two bridges, the Bosphorus Bridge, and the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge, otherwise known as the Bosphorus II Bridge, both about 1.5km in length. A tunnel is due for completion shortly. Most famous for linking the Aegean Sea with the Black Sea, it is often referred to as the gateway from Europe to Asia. Take time to enjoy a boat trip on the Bosphorus and see the city from a new perspective. Boats run at regular intervals from the Eminönü terminal (see p. 57) up the river and back or across to the other side. Karakoy has a terminal, too, for short trips. Simply buy your boat trip ticket from the booth next to the ferry terminal. It is clearly signposted. The trips are really cheap, too. Adults can travel for just a few Turkish lira, with discounts offered for children depending on the cruise chosen and the time of year.

The Princes' Islands ★

Whatever you do don't miss the chance to visit these islands, especially the largest of the nine Buyuk Ada (Büyükada). Boats (see p. 59) go from the quayside at Sirkeci regularly most days, stopping at the other islands of Kadikoy, Burgaz Adasi and

Heybeliada, and finally stopping at Buyuk Ada. No cars are allowed on Buyuk Ada so, to explore, hail a horse-drawn carriage and travel in some style. The children will love it. There are lots of good sandy beaches, or head inland a little to see rows of wooden houses built to a style reminiscent of Art Nouveau design.

Nature Reserves, Parks & Gardens

Feshane Children's Entertainment Park ★★★

FIND ALL AGES

Eski Feshane Caddesi, Defterdar Duragi, Eyüp +90 212 501 73 26.

This is a fabulous park for young children to let off steam. There are play activities for toddlers through to children of around 5 years or more, plus rides for older children and areas for sports. A regular programme of events and festivals is aimed at children of all ages, too. The tourist offices usually have a good leaflet telling you what's on and when. Nearby is the Feshane market, a labyrinth of tiny walkways where everything from gold to clocks can be found, and an interesting place to spend a little time when in this part of the city.

***Open** 10am-8pm daily. **Admission** free. Rides cost extra.*

Gülhane Park ★

Aya Sofya Square

A wide open space with fountains, flower borders and a frenzy of people, Gülhane Park is not only a popular location for visitors to rest awhile but also a meeting place for locals, especially just before prayers. It lies with the great Blue Mosque as a backdrop and with the Aya Sofya and Topkapi Palace in view. Horse-drawn carriages can be hired from here for just a few lira, taking you on a short tour of the immediate area, while sightseeing buses and trams leave here (and stop off here) for longer journeys around the city.

***Open** daily. **Admission** free.*

Miniaturk ★★★ VALUE

Imrahor Avenue, Sutluce Istanbul. +90 (212) 222 28 82; www.miniaturk.com.tr

This park features models of important buildings in the city and it is mentioned a few times in this chapter but it richly deserves the praise because seemingly everything to amuse children and protect them from injury has been thought of, including bouncy rubber flooring (similar to what you get in most UK playgrounds), which will prevent injury should a little one fall from one of its play attractions. Among its features are a playground with swings, slides, models of castles to climb and a toy train – the Miniaturk Express – that takes a trip around the park. There's even a Trojan horse to climb. Its Country in Miniature permanent exhibition, meanwhile, includes beautifully crafted, if tiny, versions of the Süleymaniye Mosque, the Selimiye Mosque, Aya Sofya and the Dolmabahçe Palace, together

with Ecyad Castle, the Bosphorus Bridge, the city walls and the Atatürk Olympic Stadium, to name just a few.

***Open** 10am–10pm daily summer, 10am–6pm winter. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, children under 6 free.*

Röne Park ★

Istanbul Caddesi, Yeşilköy

With lots of mature trees and shady areas, this park is popular because it offers some respite from the sun in the summer months. A stone's throw from the Bosphorus on Istanbul Caddesi in Yeğilköy, Röne Park is a good place to take the family en masse before or after a trip along the river (see p. 59). There's a playground, a little children's pet zoo, parkland areas and a pleasing walkway with stopping-off points to and from the river.

***Open** daily. **Admission** free.*

Historic Buildings & Monuments

Aya Sofya (Haghia Sophia) ★

VALUE

Aya Sofya Meydani, Sultanahmet Square. +90 212 522 17 50.

This outstanding building has been many things – a basilica, mosque and now a museum – but at each stage it has stood as an example of extraordinary architecture and is still regarded as one of the finest surviving Byzantine buildings of its kind. It dates from around AD532–7 and for more than a thousand years it was the largest cathedral in the world. Today it is most noted for its mosaics that have stood the test of time, its marble pillars and its dome that appears to be suspended in air but for a series of 40 arched windows that look as though they should break under

Aya Sofya

its weight. In fact, fascinatingly, it is these same windows and some piers and buttresses that give the structure its stability. The bright interior is a riot of colour. It is well worth a visit, and a must when in Istanbul, but realistically older children and teenagers are more likely to find it more interesting than really tiny tots. It might be a good idea to take something along to entertain young children in their buggy while the rest of the family views this masterpiece of architecture. If you have a child in a buggy you can access it easily, although it will be more difficult to visit the higher levels.

Open *9am–4.30pm Tues–Sun.*
Admission *15 YTL.*

Dolmabahçe Palace ★★

Dolmabahçe Caddesi Beşiktaş.
+90 212 236 90 00.

With a total of more than 280 rooms, some 40 halls and six hammam complexes, this palace is a massive structure and will take several hours to explore. You might find it best to visit it a couple of times during your stay, as young children especially might find it all too much. Be sure to take a buggy with you so that they can ride for most of the visit. The size of the palace is exceptional and even if you do only a fraction of it in one visit it can still be tiring for the younger members of the family. There are two tours, one to the Selamlik section where the astonishing domed Ceremonial Hall and numerous grandiose state rooms are seen, and the other to the Harem,

Dolmabahçe Palace

which is less grand but just as fascinating, so breaking up your visit is relatively easy. A good tip is to stop awhile in the little restaurant for a breather. A snack and a shake from the special children's menu are sure to revive a flagging family. The palace was built in the 19th century to a Baroque style, is outstandingly lavish and stands right on the side of the Bosphorus, dominating the skyline from the river as well as the surrounding roads. To see it is a must when visiting Istanbul. No discount for children though.

Open *9am–3pm daily, closed Mon and Thur.* ***Admission*** *12 YTL for Sultan's Quarters, 8 YTL for harem, 10 YTL for the garden, 10 YTL for tours and an extra 12 YTL if you wish to take photos.* ***Amenities*** *restaurant.*

Roman Hippodrome

Meydani 21, Sultanahmet Square.
+90 212 511 58 88.

Once the centre of Byzantine life, the hippodrome captures

the imagination the moment you see it. While only the remains can be seen today just off Sultanahmet Square, it hints at its extraordinary size and importance all those years ago. It's not hard to visualise and 'hear' the thousands upon thousands of people who would have at one time stood on the spot to watch executions. Today, it has an elegant feel and is great for taking a break from the hustle of the city by resting on one of the benches rather conveniently supplied and enjoying a quick drink. A couple of small kiosks sell drinks, although as with any city visit it's probably best to have a few of your children's favourites in your bag. There are public toilets close by too, in case your children need to freshen up a bit. While resting here, do look at the two obelisks that stand prominently in the square. One is Egyptian and is believed to date from around 1500BC, while the other is a 5th-century Serpentine Column.

***Open** daily. **Admission** free.*

Süleymaniye Mosque

Siddik Sami Onar Caddesi Vefa.
+90 212 522 02 98.

The first sight of this mosque is likely to be its four elegant minarets and, as you get closer, its 100 or so little domed roofs with a large one in the centre. The mosque is a powerful sight. Located on the west bank of the Golden Horn, the waterway that flows inland from the Bosphorus, this mosque is most noted for being built on the orders of the Sultan Süleymaniye and designed by the Ottoman architect Sinan in the 16th century.

***Open** 9am–5pm daily. **Admission** free.*

The Blue Mosque ★★

Meydani 21, Sultanahmet Square.
+90 212 458 07 76.

Built in 1609–16, the Sultan Ahmet Mosque, or more commonly and romantically known as the Blue Mosque because of the blue Iznik tiles that decorate its interior, is a must to see. It is a landmark building of the city and

The Blue Mosque

easily spotted because it is the only building with six minarets, a rare and controversial aspect of its design at the time it was built. It stands opposite the Aya Sofya (Haghia Sophia) in Sultanahmet Square. Young children are likely to be bored by a visit to a mosque, so if you're planning to visit this or any of the other mosques in Istanbul be sure to take along games or books to keep your children amused. This one, though, really shouldn't be missed. You'll be amazed at its beauty, and perhaps even the little ones will be silenced by its powerful feeling of tranquillity.

Open *9am–5pm daily.* ***Admission*** *free.*

Topkapi Palace ★★

Topkapi Palace, Babihümayun Caddesi Sultanahmet. *+90 212 512 04 80.*

The Topkapi Palace dates from the Ottoman period when it was the home of the Sultans and therefore at the heart of 15th- to 19th-century life. It houses priceless treasures from the period, including armour, porcelain, intricate fabrics and robes, jewels, works of art, calligraphy and manuscripts. Much of the hoard would have been the personal belongings of the Sultans. Now, much of this fabulous collection, splendid though it is, will be lost on under-5s. They will probably argue that running around the gardens would be much more fun. Older children and teenagers though should find the exhibits fascinating. The key objects to look out for are the famous jewelled Ceremonial Helmet and the Topkapi dagger. Two teenagers standing next to me on my visit became transfixed by these two exhibits. The palace itself stands in a massive courtyard of pathways and lawn gardens with pavilions. Taking a buggy would be advisable, although there are a few seating areas for youngsters to rest awhile. You can visit the kitchens, which over-5s should appreciate, along with a library and even a harem. The latter may take a bit of explaining though.

Open *9am-5pm daily, closed Tues.* ***Admission*** *12 YTL adults, 5 YTL children. Separate admission for treasury and harem 10 YTL each.* ***Amenities*** *cafe.*

Yerebatan Sarayi (the Basilica Cistern) ★★ VALUE

Yerebatan Caddesi 1. *+90 212 522 12 59.*

Topkapi Palace

Even if the thought of visiting an underground cistern doesn't appeal and your children can't imagine why you would want them to accompany you on such a visit, whatever you do don't miss the chance to see this extraordinary tourist attraction. Gloomy, eerily lighted and cavernous, it has a series of columns arranged in rows between which water would have at one time risen. It was built to supply water for the city centuries ago. Get your children to look out for the two column bases carved as Medusa heads.

Open *9am–5.30pm daily, closed Tues.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

The Top Museums

Archaeological Museum (Arkeoloji Müzesi) ★★

Osman Hamdi Bey Yokuşu. +90 212 520 77 40.

Easy to find a short distance from the Topkapi Palace, the fascinating Archaeological Museum is a must for the agenda whatever the age of your children. Along with all the outstanding exhibits, it has a special ground-floor children's museum, complete with a medieval castle to climb all over, a play area and places to get refreshments along the way. It covers a number of periods of Turkey's, and in particular Istanbul's, history over four floors in an easy-to-navigate fashion. Among the collections exhibited in 20 or so galleries are antiquities from the ancient Thrace and the Byzantine periods, the Anatolia and Troy collection and classical artefacts dating back thousands of years. Ceramics and tiles are exhibited in a separate exhibition area within the museum complex.

Open *9am–5.30pm Tues–Sun.* ***Admission*** *5 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *children's museum, play area, refreshments.*

Denız Müzesi (Naval Museum) ★★ VALUE

Ortakoy Waterfront. +90 212 327 43 46.

Turkey is proud of its naval history and this is brought vividly to life at the Deniz Müzesi. Inside, its atmospheric exhibition halls show pictures, photographs, charts, ship nameplates and artefacts from serveral decades, while in its extensive grounds are the remains of cannons, anchors from ships and even ships themselves. Your children, especially, will love it. Pretending to be a naval officer barking orders from behind one of the cannons will, no doubt, be the highlight of their visit to Istanbul.

Open *9am–5pm Wed, Fri, Sat and Sun.* ***Admission*** *5 YTL.*

Sadberk Hanim Museum

Sakip Sabanci Caddesi 22, Emirgan. +90 277 22 00.

Located in the Sariyer district, this museum has two main sections: archaeology and ethnography. In its archeological section there are around 7,000 antiques from different civilizations, while its ethnographic section houses

exhibits from the early Islamic period through to the Seljuk and Ottoman years. It is primarily an educational venue and although, like most of the musuems in Istanbul it doesn't have an area specifically for children, most members of the family should find it interesting, the exception being really young tots. Again, books and games are likely to be needed to keep them entertained, leaving you free to enjoy the exhibits. The museum has a little refreshment area, and although the selection is limited, a chocolate bar is more than likely to light up the eyes of even the most tired child in an instant.

Open *10am–5pm daily, closed Wed.* ***Admission*** *5.5 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *refreshment area.*

The Istanbul Toy Museum ★★★ VALUE

Ömerpaşa Avenue Dr. Zeki Zeren Street No:17, Goztepe, Istanbul
+90 216 359 4550; ***www.istanbuloyuncakmusesi.com***

The Istanbul Toy Museum is a gem for everyone who never wants to grow up. It's great for the children too, of course. It opened in 2005 and in doing so fulfilled the dream of Turkish poet and author Sunay Akin. Akin had visited his first museum, Istanbul's Archaeological Museum, when he was 6 years old and never forgot it, but it was only when he visited a toy museum in Nurnberg in Germany some years later that his dream started to take shape. He started to collect toys, began the conversion of a beautiful villa in Istanbul belonging to his family and eventually opened the toy museum. Today, it houses some 4,000 of the 7,000 toys in Akin's collection, many of which are antiques. The most notable is a miniature French violin dated to 1817, along with a doll made in the US in the 1820s, a set of marbles dating from the 1860s, lots of tin toys and porcelain dolls. The more valuable exhibits are housed

The Naval Museum

in cabinets behind glass to protect them, but boys and girls can touch some of the other items on display, including some dolls and little cars. There is also an area where they can paint and draw, and pre-school or very young school age children are likely to enjoy this particularly. Visitors tour the house, moving from room to room. Each room is designed to complement its exhibits. For example, the collection of miniature trains is displayed in a room that looks uncannily like a Pullman train compartment, while weird and wonderful spaceships have a dark backdrop with shining stars overhead. A collection of dolls is, similarly, displayed in a pretty chocolate box cottage-style bedroom. The four-storey museum, which has plenty of seating areas and a little cafe, stands in the garden of the Sultan Eyup Mosque. The public toilets are clean and spacious, and ideal should you need to change a baby or refresh a toddler. In fact, they really ought to be visited irrespective of whether your children need to use them – you have to pass through a submarine to get to them, which is huge fun.

***Open** 9.30am–6pm Tues–Sun. **Admission** 6 YTL adults, children free. **Amenities** cafe.*

Arts & Crafts

Istanbul Crafts Centre ★

Kabasakal Caddesi No5, Sultanahmet, +90 212 517 67 82.

Tucked inside an historic former educational complex of buildings, the Istanbul Crafts Centre gives visitors the opportunity to see local artisans at work on traditional crafts of the region. You can see woodturners, bookbinders, weavers, painters creating colourful scenes on pieces of ceramics, jewellery makers and designers. There's also a display of porcelain dolls and toys. While the artisans tend to prefer demonstrating their skills themselves rather than encouraging visitors to have a go, you will find that most will let your child try his or her hand at something. All the pieces on display at the crafts centre are available to purchase, and any one would make a most unusual souvenir to take home.

***Open** 9am–5pm daily. **Admission** free.*

Istanbul Crystals ★★ FIND

*Imrahor Avenue, Sutluce, Istanbul. +90 (212) 222 28 82, **www.miniaturk.com.tr**. Located at the Miniaturk complex (see p. 68)*

See the Blue Mosque, the Aya Sofya and the Topkapi Palace, among others, although this time in miniature and made of crystal. This amazing museum is eerily lit, making it atmospheric and allowing the light to fall on the pieces of crystal. All the city's main buildings have been carefully created in crystal using laser technology. It really is something quite different and should appeal to your youngsters whatever their age. They will be amazed at the size of the pieces.

***Open** 9am–7pm daily. **Admission** 5 YTL adults, children under 6 free.*

Child-friendly Tours

Bosphorus Cruise ★★ VALUE

Bosphorus Cruises. *+90 212 234 77 77; **www.plantours.com***

Taking a cruise along the Bosphorus will let you and your family see the city from a new angle, and most children love a boat ride. There are marble palaces and wooden villas of Ottoman architecture along the length of the river, plus quite a few sumptuous homes with their own moored yachts. Living beside the Bosphorus in a mansion is the dream, or in some cases the reality, of many wealthy Istanbul residents. Youngsters will love seeing the Rumeli Fortress, too. It is a prime example of military architecture and was originally built to protect the city from marauding invaders using the Bosphorus as their means of arrival.

***Cruises** leave from the Eminönü pier (see p. 57) from around 10.30am through to late depending on the season. **Prices** start from as little as 3 YTL.*

City Sightseeing Istanbul ★★

*+90 212 458 18 00; **www.city-sightseeing.com**. Hop on, hop off at Taksim Square, Old Pera, Edirnekapi, Kumkapi and Sultanahmet.*

These bright red open-top buses tour the city with hop-on, hop-off points at key places like Taksim Square, the Dolmabahçe Palace and Aya Sofya in Sultanahmet Square. For first-time visitors to the city they are great for orientation – and jolly good fun. Each tour lasts around an hour and a half, and departs every 60 minutes starting at 11am through to late afternoon. A commentary – in English as well as other languages – describes the sights and children are given their own package.

***Times** vary depending on the season but usually run hourly from 11am.*
***Price** 40 YTL adults, 30 YTL children.*

Cruising along the Bosphorus

For Active Families

Tuzla Outdoor Karting

Ankara Asfaltı, Tuzla Piyade Okulu Yanı, Tuzla, Istanbul. *+90 212 446 31 18.*

The only track approved by the International Automobile Federation, the Tuzla's 930m-long track hosts international karting races, the Turkish Championships and the city's karting marathon events. Great fun for all the family.

Open *9am–5pm Sat and Sun.* ***Price*** *30 YTL adults, 20 YTL children.*

Hammams

Cagaloglu Hamami

Cagaloglu 34110, Istanbul. *+90 212 522 24 24;* ***www.cagalogluhamami.com.tr***

It is said that no visit to Istanbul would be complete without a hammam experience, but whether you would deem a trip to a Turkish Baths as appropriate for a family outing is questionable, and certainly not one for babies and toddlers. However, maybe one of you could take some time out at the hammam, while the other takes the children karting? If you're planning to visit a hammam, however, one of the most authentic is the 300-year-old Cagaloglu Hamami, which was named in the *New York Times* as one of the '1,000 Places to See Before You Die' world wonders list.

Open *8am–10pm daily.* ***Admission*** *33 YTL.*

Shopping

To find some of the smartest shops selling everything from designer clothing to art, head for **Istiklal Street**. While younger children might be bored visiting these types of shops, teenagers, especially your girls, will love it. It was formerly the Grande Rue De Pera where Istanbul society would gather a few decades ago and parade in their finery. In recent years it has seen massive redevelopment and today has smart cafes and restaurants that sit side by side with art galleries, all with a backdrop of embassy and government buildings.

Everyone will love the atmosphere of the **Grand Bazaar**, and to haggle for a souvenir to take home is all part of the fun. Your children will enjoy trying their luck for one of the tiny ceramic bowls that, because of their bright colours, you can't miss in the bazaar. They would make an ideal trinket bowl for their bedroom back home. Tiny slippers, too, would make a great buy. Your children will love haggling for them, and then proudly wearing them later. There are around 4,000 tiny shops selling everything from crafts and jewellery to leather goods and antiques, and because Istanbul is such a child-friendly city, don't be surprised if the shopkeepers want to play and chat with your children. It can be difficult to get away and move on without offending. A small purchase of sweets or a little necklace should do the trick. Be sure to visit the Book Bazaar and the Spice

Bazaar too, which, despite its name, has lots of stalls selling Turkish Delight, the jelly-like sweet, in all manner of flavours and colours. Your children will be spoilt for choice. Get them to look out for the **Anatolian** (*+90 212 512 0686*), a shop selling carpets not dissimilar to the flying variety that crop up in fairy tales, and a collection of *sumacs* (woven then embroidered carpets), just outside the Grand Bazaar in Carsikapi Nuruosmaniye Caddesi.

In the Sultanahmet area, there are many specialist little shops selling traditional products. Look out for the **Turkish Music House in Alaykosku Caddesi** (*+90 542 824 22 12*, ***www.turkishmusichouse.com***) for some really unusual musical instruments and **Sedefkar** in Kucukayasofya Caddesi (*+90 212 516 3453*, ***www.sedefkar.com***) for jewellery and crafts made using inlaid gems and mother of pearl. Your girls might be tempted to buy a small necklace or bracelet to take home.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

INEXPENSIVE

Side Hotel and Pension ★★

VALUE

Utangac Sok 20, Istanbul. *+90 212 517 22 82;* ***www.sidehotel.com***

Easy to find, just take the tram (direction Eminonu) from Sultanahmet, hop off and stand in front of the Aya Sofya (that's the one with the red colouring, not the other one) and Utangac Sok is straight in front of you. The Side is just a little walk up this street.

If your budget is tight but you still want to be in the midst of the tourist attractions, then the Side Hotel and Pension could fit the bill perfectly. Inexpensive but modern, and exceptionally clean and tidy, this small hotel is family-run. It is within walking distance of the Blue Mosque, Aya Sofya and Topkapi Palace, making it particularly attractive if your children don't want to walk

Carpets galore at Anatolian

too far to see the main attractions of the city. Some of the rooms at the Side have shared toilet facilities though (the pensions), so be sure of what level of accommodation you are booking, but the management team promise you will have hot water at any time of day. The Side has a cosy little restaurant decorated to a traditional style where breakfast is served. Children's portions are supplied happily on request as are a steady flow of drinks. Another bonus is that the Side has a shuttle bus service from the airport to the hotel and back. There's a fee depending on when you stay but it takes the hassle out of arriving and getting to your hotel with family and an assortment of suitcases in tow. You can also leave your luggage at the hotel after check-out if you intend to extend your stay or if your flight home is later in the day. The big bonus is that children up to 6 years of age can stay free. Good family value all round.

Rooms *26 and 2 self-contained apartments for up to 4 people + cot.* ***Rates*** *from 60 YTL for a triple family pension without bathroom, from around 120 YTL for a family hotel room. Children free.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *cot (free), roof café, airport transfer, safe deposit boxes, breakfast room, luggage room (free).* ***In room*** *no AC but fans provided on request, some have en suite. Apartments AC, en-suite bathroom, kitchen.*

MODERATE

The Romance Hotel ★★

Hudavendigar Caddesi No 7, Sirkeci, Istanbul. *+90 212 512 86 76;* ***www.romancehotel.com***

Head for the Aya Sofya, stand on the Topkapi Palace side of the massive building and take the short walk to Hudavendigar Caddesi toward Eminönü. The pink building comes into view.

This pleasing, pink-washed and immaculately presented hotel is located in the Sirkeci area, close to the main tourist sights in Sultanahmet Square and the railway station. Among its features is its own Alaturka Restaurant and café where traditional Turkish dishes such as *zeytinyagli enginar* made from artichokes, *firinda manti*, a pasta and meat recipe, and desserts including baklava and other sweet pastries are served. The hotel happily caters for anyone with special diets, so if there's a diabetic or a vegetarian in your family then eating here shouldn't be a problem. Children, of course, are catered for too, and have a pretty lengthy menu tailored to their tastes and smaller appetites. The hotel has an Internet café for older children and parents, a babysitting service, play area and a separate television room, plus the services of a doctor on call. The range of facilities is good for a moderately priced hotel, and particularly useful if staying with a family.

Rooms *63 including 4 junior suites for up to 4 people + cot.* ***Rates*** *triple room 126 YTL (low) and 150 YTL (high) and junior suite 176 YTL (low) and 190 YTL (high). Children 0–6 free. Prices include buffet breakfast.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *babysitting service, doctor on call, Internet café, play area, TV room, cot (free), airport transfer (free).* ***In room*** *AC, TV, en-suite bathroom, safety deposit box.*

EXPENSIVE

The Mövenpick Hotel Istanbul ★★ VALUE

4 Levent, Istanbul. +90 212 319 29 29; www.movenpick-istanbul.com. Located at 4 Levent, a few stops on the underground system past Taksim Square.

This modern hotel situated on the outskirts of Istanbul offers a number of options and incentives to guests with children. For instance, youngsters up to 16 years of age can stay in the same room as their parents free of charge. The hotel offers baby cots, a games room as well as high chairs in the restaurant. Menus are designed with children in mind too. Its Mövenpick Ice Cream Menu is popular, as is its Family Table brunch held in its AzzuR Restaurant each Sunday. At a Family Table, held from 11am through to 3pm, authentic Turkish dishes are prepared to aged recipes, and include specialities such as Turkish white cheese, village butter, honey in its honeycomb, *poçaça*, *simit*, *bazlama* and kebabs, *katmer* with crushed sesame seeds and homemade baklava and puddings. The brunch is 65 YTL, with children up to 6 years of age free. Children 6 to 12 are charged 32.50 YTL. The Mövenpick Hotel Istanbul makes a donation from the cost of each brunch purchased to the Theodora Foundation to support children. In addition, the hotel organises chocolate-making courses for children to coincide with International Children's Day (see p. 61), and pizza and cookie-making courses. Dates vary so contact the hotel before arranging a stay.

Rooms *249 including family suites.* ***Rates*** *rooms from around 500 YTL. Children free.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *babysitting service, cots, games room, high chairs, restaurant, parking, spa, shopping, swimming pool.* ***In room*** *TV, AC, safe, Internet access.*

The Ritz-Carlton ★★★

Suzer Plaza, Elmadag, 34367 Sisli, Istanbul, +90 212 334 44 44; www.ritzcarlton.com

Located just 10 minutes' walk or so from Taksim Square in one direction and the Dolmabahçe Palace in the other.

All the glamour and sumptuousness of the multi award-winning Ritz-Carlton makes a stay in Istanbul that extra bit special. The hotel, which is a short walk from the Dolmabahçe Palace (see p. 70), welcomes children. Its special Ritz Kids and P.O.L.O (Protect Our Little Ones) programmes are designed to keep children entertained and safe, while giving parents a break. Perfect! Upon arrival, guests travelling with children under 5 are escorted to their rooms by a specially trained bellman who installs a range of safety features, including a night light, bath tap cover, electric plug covers and emergency safety card with a list of emergency telephone numbers geared towards children. Other safety measures provided include protective netting for balconies, water temperature controls and special toilet locks. A 24-hour babysitting service is provided, as

well as cots and baby cleansing products, while in the restaurant and as part of the room service, a children's menu is offered. Dishes featured on the menus include fish fingers, pasta, burgers, meze and delicious desserts such as chocolate cake and banana splits. Children are given crayons, drawing paper and stuffed toys to make their stay extra special too, plus parents are given suggested itineraries with details of attractions that might interest youngsters of all ages. Prices, as might be expected, are not cheap, but memories will last forever!

Rooms *244 including 23 executive suites suitable for families, 57 club rooms and Ritz-Carlton Suite with adjoining staff facilities.* ***Rates*** *rooms from around 600 YTL and executive suites from around 1030 YTL.* ***Credit*** *AmEx, MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *babysitting service, children's club, restaurant with children's menu, valet parking, spa, shopping arcade, swimming pools.* ***In room*** *special children's safety features such as balcony nets, night lights, cot, baby products, telephone, TV, AC, safe, Internet access.*

FAMILY-FRIENDLY DINING

INEXPENSIVE

Hangar Cafe ★ FIND

Emniyet Evleri Lalapasa Sk. No7, 4 Levent, Istanbul +90 212 324 88 80.

Located just behind the Mövenpick Hotel Istanbul. Simply take the first right from the hotel's main entrance and it is a short walk down and on the left-hand side.

Guney Park Terrace at The Ritz-Carlton

If donar kebabs are a passion with your children, head for this stylish little cafe. Cheerfully decorated and serving a whole host of goodies, such as meatballs, burgers with chips and salads, and pastries, the cafe's fresh kebab meat in the window is the big draw. Served with fries and salad, it is ideal for a quick informal meal or snack.

Open *10am–8pm daily.* ***Main Courses*** *9 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *menu suitable for children, good buggy and wheelchair access.*

MODERATE

The Pudding Shop Lale Restaurant ★★ VALUE

Divan Yolu Caddesi No 6, Sultanahmet. +90 212 522 29 70 or +90 212 511 05 39; ***www.puddingshop.com****. Easy to find, look out for the tourist information office at Sultanahmet and on the opposite side of the road directly in front you will find the Pudding Shop, as it is affectionately known.*

One of the oldest established restaurants in Istanbul and right

in the thick of things close to the Blue Mosque, Aya Sofya and the Topkapi Palace in Sultanahmet, the atmospheric Pudding Shop serves classic Turkish meat and vegetarian dishes and drinks at inexpensive prices. Its zucchini stuffed with cheese or its şiş kebab with salad followed by chocolate pudding comes recommended, and children can enjoy mini versions from the main selection. There's a good choice of ice cream and drinks too.

***Open** 7am–10pm daily. **Main Courses** from around 10 to 12 YTL. **Amenities** children's portions and good buggy and wheelchair access.*

EXPENSIVE

Beyaz Restaurant ★★ VALUE

*Kennedy Caddesi, Kumkapi. +90 212 638 5919; **www.beyaz restaurant.com**. Easy to find at the fish market near Kumkapi on the southernmost coastline of the mainland. Looks out over the water.*

Serving traditional Turkish dishes with the emphasis firmly on fish, the Beyaz Restaurant is located right on the waterside at the fish market near Kumkapi. Prices are mid range for fresh cuts of tuna, mackerel, salmon, turbot, sea bream, squid and sea bass, with a little more for lobster and sole. For children, there are special platters of mixed fish. A good choice of salads and vegetables is offered to accompany the main courses, with desserts such as crème brulée and crumpets with thick syrup to follow. It's easy to spend some time gazing at not only the big commercial ships that follow a course along the Bosphorus on their way to Asia from Europe, or vice versa, but also the colourful fishing boats while you dine.

***Open** 10am–10pm daily. **Main Courses** from around 15 YTL. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** children's portions, high chairs on request, good buggy and wheelchair access.*

Geziistanbul ★★ FIND

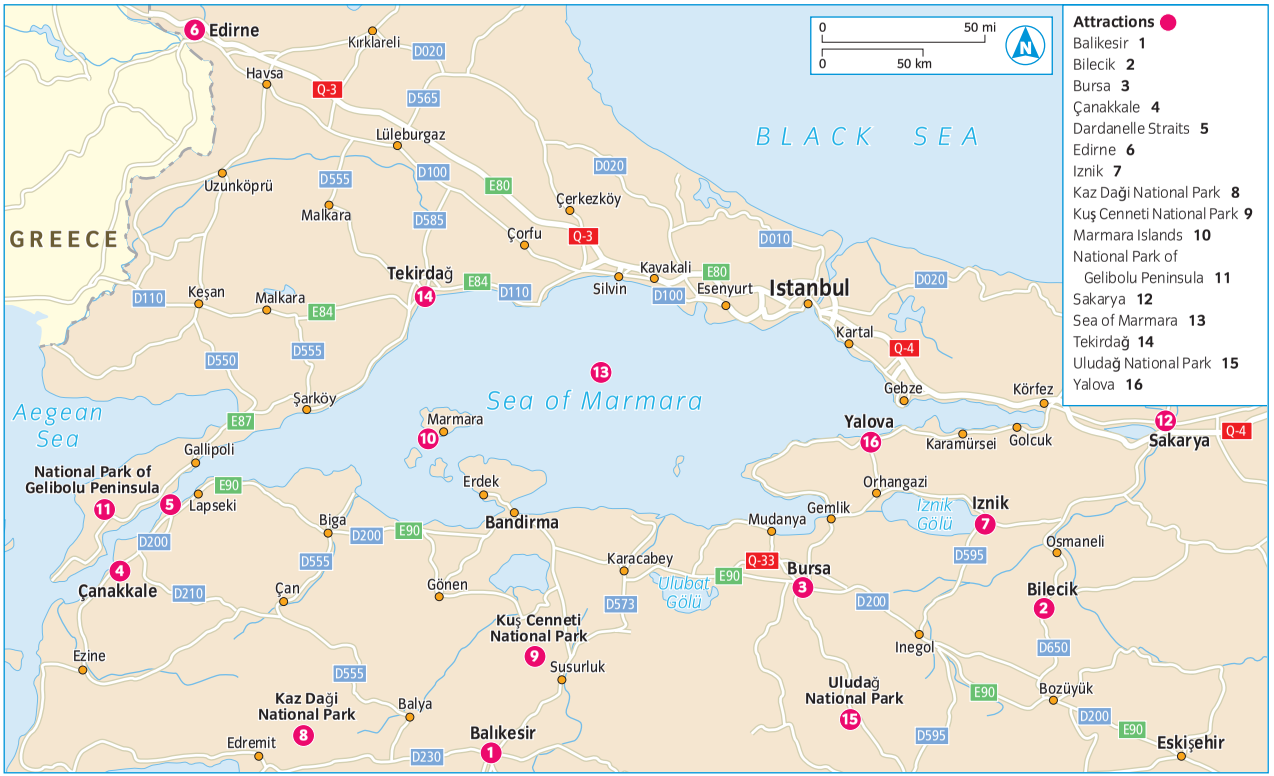
*Taksim AKM Yani, Inonu Caddesi, Istanbul +90 212 292 5353; **www.geziistanbul.com***

Located in one corner of Taksim Square. The chocolates displayed temptingly in its window will make it easy to find and draw you in.

A stylish cafe and restaurant with outside dining that looks right out over Taksim Square, this popular eatery has the bonus of an in-house chocolaterie and patisserie too. Traditional main-course meals of meat and fish in traditional sauces as well as vegetarian options can, therefore, be followed by some truly delicious pastries and chocolate, which you can also take home with you. A big plus is that Geziistanbul has a good wine and coffee selection too. If you thought you had tasted the best cappuccino ever, wait until you have tried this restaurant's offering. Geziistanbul is a hit with all the family, despite the prices being a tad on the expensive side.

***Open** 10am–11pm daily. **Main Courses** from around 25 YTL for a typical meal with one drink. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** children's menu, high chairs on request, good buggy and wheelchair access.*

4 The Marmara Region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Attractions
Balikesir 1
Bilecik 2
Bursa 3
Çanakkale 4
Dardanelle Straits 5
Edirne 6
Iznik 7
Kaz Dağı National Park 8
Kuş Cenneti National Park 9
Marmara Islands 10
National Park of Gelibolu Peninsula 11
Sakarya 12
Sea of Marmara 13
Tekirdağ 14
Uludağ National Park 15
Yalova 16
BLACK SEA
GREECE
Aegean Sea
Sea of Marmara
Edirne
Kırklareli
Havsa
Lüleburgaz
Uzunköprü
Malkara
Çerkezköy
Çorlu
Tekirdağ
Kavakali
Silvin
Esenyurt
Istanbul
Kartal
Gebze
Körfez
Yalova
Karamürsel
Golcuk
Sakarya
Keşan
Malkara
Şarköy
Marmara
Gallipoli
National Park of Gelibolu Peninsula
Lapseki
Çanakkale
Erdek
Bandirma
Biga
Orhangazi
Gemlik
Iznik Gölü
Iznik
Mudanya
Osmaneli
Karacabey
Bursa
Ulubat Gölü
Bilecik
Gönen
Çan
Küş Cenneti National Park
Inegol
Ezine
Susurluk
Uludağ National Park
Bozüyük
Kaz Dağı National Park
Balya
Edremit
Balıkesir
Eskişehir
Q-3
Q-4
Q-33
D020
D565
D100
E80
D585
D010
E84
D110
D555
D550
E87
E90
D200
D210
D573
D650
D595
D230

Without any doubt the Marmara region revolves around the great city of Istanbul but there are a great many other towns and cities to visit too: some have attractions that may suit children, others do not, but any of them may be well worth a visit if your family likes to discover new places.

The beauty of the Marmara region is that you don't have to travel too far to see historic attractions, visit restaurants and find parklands to explore. Importantly, lying as it does around the Sea of Marmara, there are miles and miles of soft sandy beaches to enjoy too, so your children can have the best of all worlds.

The region has a good highway infrastructure so journeys from one part of the area to another can be fast, with many link roads generally of a high standard.

The town of **Tekirdağ** with its wonderful beaches, the living history city of **Edirne** with its outstanding Ottoman architecture and bazaars, and the quieter **Kirklareli** overlooking the Black Sea lie to the north of the Bosphorus along with the Sea of Marmara and the Dardenelle Straits. Collectively known as the **Trakya area**, it is famous for its fields of sunflowers and vineyards.

The Marmara region's towns and cities to the south of Istanbul include **Balikesir** and **Çanakkale** – famed for Homer's legendary Trojan Horse. More central are the towns of **Bilecik** in the Sakarya River Valley, **Yalova** with its natural springs, the major 'silk and ski' city of **Bursa** and **Iznik,** famous for its glazed tiles that originate from Ottoman times.

In terms of accommodation, the region ranges from bustling holiday resorts and quayside hotels to quieter mountain retreats and, like the rest of Turkey, on the whole they all welcome children.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Tourist Information Offices

The Marmara region is one of the smaller areas of Turkey and is relatively easy to explore. It is served especially well by the tourist authority in so far as there are tourism offices in the centre of most of the region's main towns, such as Tekirdağ, Edirne and Kirklareli to the north, along with Balikesir, Bilecik, Bursa, Çanakkale, Sakarya and Yalova. Istanbul, of course, has a number of tourist information offices dotted around the city and may be a good stopping-off point if you fly into its Atatürk Havalimani International Airport before starting your journey to the Marmara region.

Akçay (Edremit)
Akçay Caddesi, 1 Sok 1, Akçay;
+90 266 384 11 13.

Ayvalik
Yat Limani Karşisi (opposite the harbour), Ayvalik; *+90 266 312 21 22*.

Balikesir
Valilik Binasi, Kat 5, Balikesir; *+90 266 245 13 35*; *www.balikesirturizm.gov.tr*.

Bilecik
Istiklal Mah., Santral Sok 4, Bilecik; *+90 228 212 15 88*.

Burhaniye (Ören)
Meço Caddesi 25,Ören Polis Karakolu Bitişiği, Burhaniye (Ören); *+90 266 416 35 00*.

Bursa
Darphane Mah., Osmangazi, Caddesi 6, Osmangazi, Bursa; *+90 224 220 99 26*.

Çanakkale
Kayserili Ahmet Paşa Caddesi, Çanakkale; *+90 286 217 23 71*; *www.canakkaleguide.com*.

Edirne
Devecilhan Kültür Merkezi, Edirne; *+90 284 213 02 32*

Erdek
Yali Mah., Kalyoncu Sk 19, Erdek: *+90 266 835 11 69*.

Istanbul – Airport
Atatürk Havalimani International, Airport Arrivals Hall, Istanbul; *+90 212 663 07 98*.

Istanbul – Beyazit
Hurriyet Meydani, Beyazit Square, Beyazit, Istanbul; *+90 212 522 49 02*.

Istanbul – Elmadag
Cumhuriyet Caddesi, Elmadag, Istanbul; *+90 212 511 58 88*.

Istanbul – Karakoy
Karakoy International Maritime Passenger Terminal, Karakoy, Istanbul; *+90 212 249 57 76*.

Istanbul – Sultanahmet
Divan Yolu Caddesi (near the Hippodrome), Sultanahmet, Istanbul; *+90 212 511 58 88*.

Iznik
Kiliçarslan Caddesi, Belediye Hizmet Binasi, Zemin Kat, Iznik; *+90 224 757 19 33*.

Kirklareli
Karakaş Mah., Istasyon Caddesi, Kirklareli; *+90 288 214 19 47*; *www.kirklareli.gov.tr*.

Sakarya
Adnan Menderes Caddesi, Orman Bölge Müdürlüğü, Binasi Kat 1, Sakarya; *+90 264 276 20 91*.

Tekirdağ
Ertuğrul Mah., Barbaros Caddesi 5, Tekirdağ ; *+90 282 261 88 28*.

Yalova
Kazin Karabekir Caddesi, Il Özel Idare Müdürlüğü, Hizmet Binasi Kat 3, Yalova; *+90 226 813 85 07*.

Useful websites for visitors:

www.gototurkey.co.uk

www.tourismturkey.org

ESSENTIALS

Getting There

By Plane The Marmara region is relatively easy to get to because

it stretches from the city limits of Istanbul. A large number of airlines from around the world, such as **British Airways, KLM, Lufthansa** and **Turkish Airlines** (see p. 34), fly into and out of Istanbul's **Atatürk Havalimani International Airport** (*www.ataturkairport.com*), it seems, at all hours of the day. From Istanbul I suggest you hire a car, which, with young children, is probably the best option for exploring the area. Alternatively, you can reach the Marmara region by Intercity bus or rail. There are a large number of **car-hire companies** (see p. 34) operating from the airport, as well as taxis and a good network of **buses and trains** (see p. 35) that depart regularly from the city to head for the main towns and cities of the Marmara region.

By Road and Rail Intercity buses operate on a highly efficient system and run from the airport out towards the main cities of the Marmara region. The main bus companies are:

Kâmil Koç, Istanbul: *+90 212 658 20 00*; Bursa *+90 242 261 50 00*.

Ulusoy, Istanbul: *+90 212 471 71 00*, *www.ulusoy.com.tr*.

Varan, Istanbul *+90 212 251 74 74*, *www.varan.com.tr*.

Trains operated by the **Turkish State Railway** (TCDD – *www.tcdd.gov.tr*), leave from **Haydarpaşa Station** (*+90 216 336 04 75*) and **Sires Station** (*+90 212 527 00 50*) in Istanbul on a regular basis. Do allow plenty of time if taking a journey by bus or train to the Marmara region as the journey times can be on the slow side, which, with children, could be a problem. There are a few express routes, such as the **Haydarpaşa–Adapazarı service** that runs regularly from Istanbul and stops at various stations throughout the region.

Orientation

The Marmara region lies to the northwest of Turkey and centres around the great city of Istanbul. It is divided into two main areas: one side is European while the other is Asian. In the northern part of the region is the **Trakya area**, characterised by its fields of sunflowers and vines. Its major towns and cities are Tekirdağ, Edirne and Kirklareli. The **southern Marmara region** lies across the Sea of Marmara with the Dardenelle Straits and the Bosphorus, which separates Istanbul in half, at either end of the stretch of water. The southern area has Balikesir, Bilecik, Bursa, Çanakkale, Sakarya and Yalova among its main towns and cities. To the south of the Marmara region is the **Aegean region** (see p. 115), to the northeast you reach the start of the **Black Sea region** (see p. 177) and to the east you are beginning to venture into what is regarded as **Anatolia** (see p. 197), the largest region of Turkey.

Getting Around

The road infrastructure of the Marmara region is particularly well developed, and driving from the westernmost city of Edirne to Istanbul and onwards to Iznik, for example, is a journey of a couple of hours or so via the E80 highway. Off the highway are main roads to all of the other main towns and cities; for instance, the E87 runs down along the Gallipoli peninsula and the E84 alongside the Sea of Marmara to Tekirdağ. On the southern side of the Sea of Marmara the E90 hugs the 'coast' to Bursa and beyond to Bilecik. Highways and link roads are generally of a high standard, whereas minor roads and 'scenic' routes are, by their nature, rougher and have few amenities, so be sure to take drinks and snacks for your children.

All of the main towns and cities have **bus routes** linking them, and a comprehensive timetable with times and routes is available from the tourist information offices (see p. 85). Bus stops are clearly marked with the number of the bus and its destination. You could also try hailing a **dolmuş** (shared taxi) for a local journey, if only for the experience, though this may be tricky if you have young children and bags. These **dolmuş** tend to be minibuses that run along routes clearly marked with a blue *dolmuş* sign. Although inexpensive, they do not generally run to a set timetable. A **train service**, albeit intermittent, links some of the towns and cities too; again a good route map and timetables are available from the tourist information offices dotted throughout the region.

PLANNING YOUR OUTINGS

The Marmara region is, in many ways, one of the easiest parts of Turkey to travel around and explore with a family because its towns are not so spread out, making refresh stops much easier. Its towns and cities are well developed too, with public toilets usually clearly marked and restaurants and cafés that welcome children. Nonetheless, between the towns and cities are large open areas. Some are areas of outstanding landscapes with parkland and picnic spots, which, although well worth visiting, do not necessarily afford many amenities. It is essential therefore to take along plenty of drinks and light finger-food snacks for young children, as well as books and games to keep them happy during the journey from one tourist attraction or town to another. Older children and teenagers will probably prefer mp3 players with their favourite music installed.

It is also a good idea to take along a change of clothing, together with light jumpers for covering up, swimwear in case you find a nice spot to have a swim and hats to protect from

the sunshine. The sun can be especially fearsome in the summer months so take some high factor protection cream too. All this should easily pack into an average hire car's boot!

INSIDER TIP

The tourist information offices can generally supply you with a good road map of the region. The **Turkey Tourist Map** published by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism is especially good, with all major and secondary roads clearly marked along with places of interest.

FAST FACTS

Money Exchange All the main towns and cities in the Marmara region have money exchange centres, although most banks and hotels will exchange money too. The centres tend to be open from around 9am to 1pm, although some in the more touristy areas will open later.

Toilets Like the rest of Turkey, public toilets tend to be provided in the centre of the larger towns only, so it's always advisable to use the facilities of restaurants or picnic areas when you stop for refreshments. *Bay* is for men, *Bayan* for women. Always carry some toilet paper with you as it is not always provided. The facilities on the highways, such as the E80, tend to be more modern.

WHAT TO SEE & DO

Children's Top 10 Attractions

1. **Climbing** the steps of the legendary Trojan Horse at Hisarlik at Troy, Çanakkale, and pretending to be an ancient warrior fending off the Trojans. See p. 90

2. **Seeing** the high Kaz Dağı mountain range in the Kaz Dağı National Park and taking a walk along one of the park's nature trails. See p. 99

3. **Splashing** in the waters at Kumla Beach tucked in the Sea of Marmara's Gulf of Gemlik and making sandcastles in the soft sand. See p. 98

4. **Hearing** and seeing children of Edirne play in the tiny, narrow and safe streets of the Kaleiçi district of Edirne and joining in the fun. See p. 94

5. **Taking** a horse-drawn carriage ride on Buyuk Ada (Büyükada), one of the islands in the Sea of Marmara, and then looking out for its little wooden houses. See p. 109

6. **Laughing** as you try to eat the sticky *pişmaniye*, a sweet of thin layers of sugar that melt in the mouth. It is available almost everywhere in Iznik. See p. 96

7. **Cycling** in Bursa's Koza Park and then eating ice cream with chocolate sauce al fresco style at one of its little cafes. See p. 101

8. **Learning** to haggle with a stallholder in the Bursa bazaar, securing a bargain and taking

home a truly unique souvenir. See p. 110

9 **Studying** the series of domes of the Old Mosque in Edirne and seeing how many there are. See p. 103

10 **Sailing** the waters of the Dardanelle Straits and looking out for colourful fish. See p. 94

Child-friendly Events & Entertainment

International Bird Sanctuary Culture and Tourism Festival

ALL AGES

Beginning June; Kuş Cenneti National Park, Bandirma, Balikesir.

The International Bird Sanctuary Culture and Tourism Festival is a fun event that raises awareness and funds for the important work of the Kuş Cenneti National Park sanctuary (see p. 101), which offers protection for mainly waterbirds, including pelicans and flamingos. The festival is generally held over a few days, during which there is a programme of musical events, dancing, demonstrations, stalls and special craft workshops for children to enjoy. Refresh-ments usually take the form of local delicacies. The local **tourist information centre** in Balikesir (see p. 86) carries information on the special events planned every year for the festival, along with a map with directions on how to find the park. Although signposted from both Balikesir and Bandirma, it is a little tricky to find as some of the roads leading to the park are small and signs are easy to miss. You could recruit the little back seat passengers and suggest a game of seeing who can spot the signs.

The Troy Festival, Troy, Çanakkale ★★ ALL AGES

August; Iskele Meydani, Hisarlik, Troy, Çanakkale +90 286 283 95 36.

Every August schoolchildren from throughout Turkey, especially those in the Marmara region, release a white dove, symbolising peace from the Trojan Horse as part of the Troy Festival at Hisarlik at Troy, Çanakkale. The horse is a reconstruction of the giant wooden creation made famous for its part in the battles with the Trojans at Troy. Children can climb a series of steps that lead to the 'belly' of the legendary horse. The special day features dances, music and other celebrations designed with children very much in mind. Your family, whatever their ages, will love this special event, so be sure to visit in August if you can.

Turkish Shadow Puppet Theatre ALL AGES

Karagöz Antikaci, a shop in the Eski Aynali Çarsi in Bursa's bazaar gives impromptu performances. Also a programme of shows at various venues throughout Bursa. ***www.karagoztravel.com/karagozshop.htm***.

Children will love the chance to see a puppet show, known as a Karagöz, a type of Punch and Judy show, although in this instance the two main characters are Karagöz and Hacivat. It is in the style of traditional shows but

the puppets are in shadow rather than in full view. The storylines tend to be humorous with a strong dose of satire so be sure the story and the antics of the characters are suitable for the ages of your children. Karagöz originated as a form of entertainment in Ottoman times, and can now be seen throughout Turkey. In the Marmara region, look out for the shows at various venues, especially in Bursa where a monument to Karagöz is located, and head for Karagöz Antikaci (*+90 224 220 53 50*), an antique shop in Eski Aynali Çarsi in Bursa's covered bazaar, which has a collection of old puppets on display.

Turkish shadow puppets

Towns & Cities

Balikesir

Balikesir lies close to what is regarded as the Marmara region's border area with the Aegean region. To its north is the town of **Gönen**, where you can enjoy the hot thermal springs that come from, it is believed, 500m underground. The town is considered to be Turkey's most important thermal resort. Just north, too, is the important commercial port of **Bandirma**. The port is the largest in the Sea of Marmara after Istanbul. Balikesir offers mainly historical buildings for its visitors to see, including its 15th-century **Yildirim Mosque** and **Zağnos Paşa Mosque**, its **Saat Kulesi clocktower** and its **Karesi Bey Mausoleum**, but younger members of the family may prefer to head out to the shores of **Lake Manyas** on the outskirts of the city where the important bird sanctuary, the **Kuş Cenneti National Park** (see p. 101), can be found.

Bilecik

The town of Bilecik is known for the commemorative festival held every September to Seyh Edebali (1206–1326), a leading figure of the town who was instrumental in the founding of the Ottoman Empire. His **mausoleum** stands in the old quarter of the city, not far from another major landmark, the **Orham Gazi Mosque**, in the Ertuğrul Gazi complex. This is a particularly pretty part of the region, standing as it does in the Sakarya River Valley. You and your family

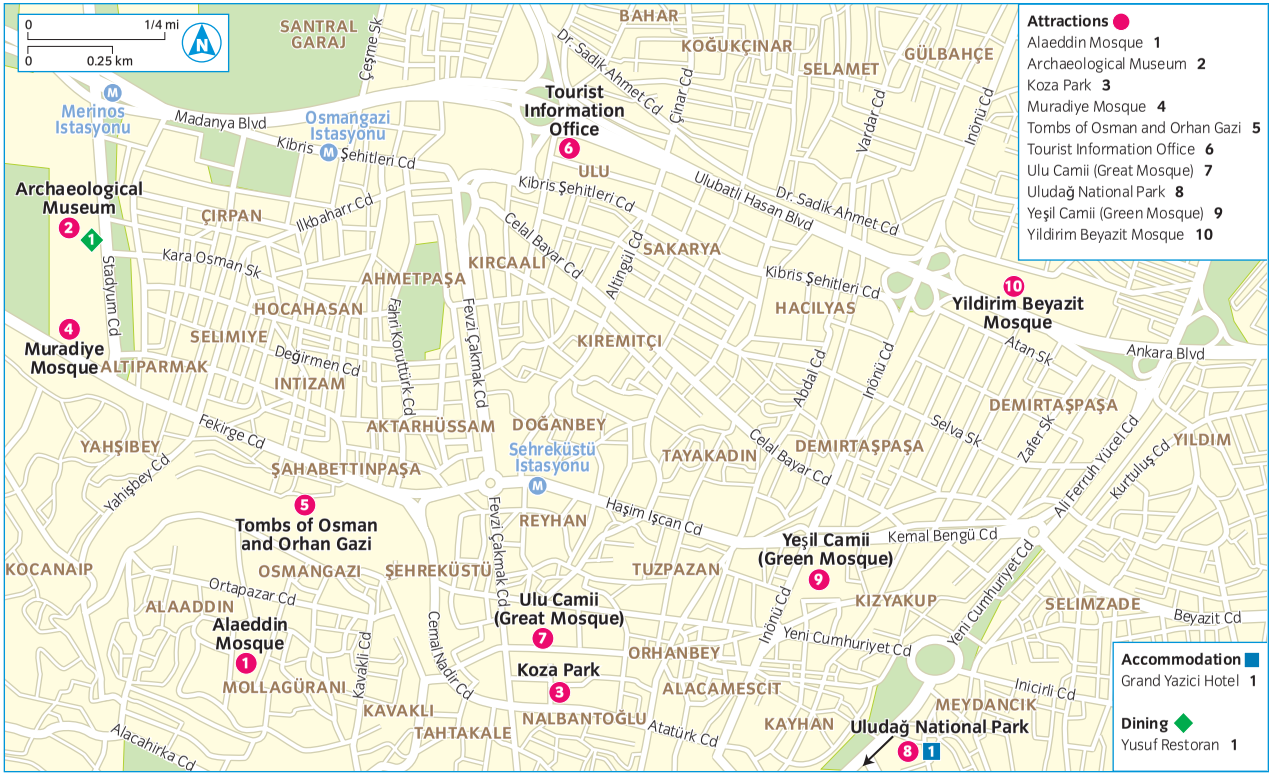
could easily spend a few hours here admiring the countryside, taking a picnic, playing a few games and then, perhaps, heading off to nearby **Söğüt** to see the life-size busts of famous figures from Turkey's history, including Ertuğrul Gazi (1198 – 1281). A nearby museum, the **Söğüt Museum** (*+90 228 361 36 94*), tells their story.

Bursa

The city of Bursa, one of the largest in this region of Turkey, lies in the foothills of the spectacular Uludağ Mountain in the **Uludağ National Park** (see p. 102). It is a city with immense history dating from pre-Roman times through the Byzantine era to the 14th century when it became the first capital city of the Ottoman Empire. Today, it is characterised by its wonderful gardens and parkland areas, interspersed by lavish Ottoman buildings and surrounded by plains full of fruit trees – Bursa is famous for its juicy peaches, so be sure to buy plenty. Walking around the city, look out for the Yeşil Camii or the **Green Mosque** as it is known, and the **Green Tomb**, otherwise known as the Yeşil Türbe. In the centre of the city, you'll also find the **Magnificent Mosque** or the Ulu Cami, the **Emir Sultan Mosque** and the **Yildirim Beyazit Mosque** to visit too, along with the fascinating **Bursa Archaeological Museum**, the **İznik Museum** and the **Turkish Islamic Art Museum** (see p. 109). While these lavishly presented buildings are worth visiting, they may be a little on the dull side for your lively youngsters, so be sure to visit **Koza Park** (see p. 101) too, where they can play and use up some energy; it's located not far from Cumhuriyet Square, the area famed for Bursa's silk trade. The park has lots of restaurants and cafés, picnic spots and play areas. From here it's a short walk to the bazaar, so be sure to take some time to haggle for some toys or jewellery and other souvenirs to take home. Not far from the city centre, the country's first winter **ski resort** (see p. 110) built on Uludağ Mountain soars into the air just south of the city.

Çanakkale

The city of Çanakkale offers plenty of activities for families. For instance, there's the impressive **Çanakkale Archaeological Museum** (see p. 107) with a display of miniature figurines and early examples of children's toys among its exhibits, and the **National Park of Gelibolu Peninsula** (see p. 102) where children can play among the parkland and beach areas (although it should be remembered that this park is a resting-place for soldiers who died in the 1915–16 Gallipoli battle). I also recommend visiting the 15th-century **Çimenlik Fortress** where a small military museum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Tombs of Osman and Orhan Gazi
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REYHAN
Yeşil Camii (Green Mosque)
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Attractions
Alaeddin Mosque 1
Archaeological Museum 2
Koza Park 3
Muradiye Mosque 4
Tombs of Osman and Orhan Gazi 5
Tourist Information Office 6
Ulu Camii (Great Mosque) 7
Uludağ National Park 8
Yeşil Camii (Green Mosque) 9
Yildirim Beyazit Mosque 10
Accommodation
Grand Yazici Hotel 1
Dining
Yusuf Restoran 1

Çanakkale Harbour

(*+90 286 213 17 30*) tells the story of the locals' battles during World War I. Along the coastline are three Ottoman fortresses, **Bigali Castle, Kilitbahir Castle** and **Seddul Bahir Castle** (see p. 103). Çanakkale is famed for its links with the legendary Trojan Horse, and a giant reconstruction of the wooden horse lies at the site known as **Hisarlik**, where a festival for schoolchildren takes place every year (see p. 90).

The city sits at the point where the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Sea link at the Çanakkale Straits and the Dardanelle Straits, and is a popular place for sailors and watersports enthusiasts. Its marina offers berths for visiting yachts as well as amenities such as restaurants and bars. These complement the many eateries found along the city's promenade, where there is also a ferry service taking visitors from the European side of the region to the Asian side. Lying just off the shoreline and reached by ferry are the **islands of Gökçeada,** an unspoilt place of hills covered by forest and ringed by beaches, and **Bozcaada,** dominated by the mighty Venetian castle and lively restaurants that line its walls – you can't miss it as you approach from the water. When you go ashore, your little ones will love the chance to explore the parts of the castle that are open to the public.

Edirne

The first thing a visitor coming from Europe into Turkey at Edirne would see is the great **Selimiye Mosque** (see p. 104). It is the city's focal point, dominates the landscape and is a masterpiece of the architect Sinan. While young children under 5 may be more interested in crayoning in their books, older children will probably be dumbfounded by the

enormity of its size and the brilliance of its interior. The mosque is well worth a visit, even if you have already visited a few others during your stay in Turkey. It is said that the historic Edirne is rather like a living museum and as you stroll around its streets gazing at building after building dating from the Ottoman period, it is easy to see why. There are bazaars, it seems, around every corner, numerous palaces, hot spring baths, bridges, especially those over the Tunca and Meriç rivers, and several mosques in addition to the great Selimiye Mosque, including the 15th-century **Eski Mosque**, the oldest in Edirne. A starkly beautiful structure, it is made from white marble in part combined with intricately carved stone facades. Such buildings testify to the city's importance in centuries past as a traders' route from Europe to Asia, usually via Istanbul, and beyond. Today, its **Kaleiçi district**, or old quarter, is quiet with few cars and its tiny, narrow streets are full of cosy restaurants and specialist shops. As well as the Selimiye Mosque there are other attractions: to look out for including the **Koru Mountain** and **Söğütlük forest recreation areas, Edirne and Enez castles,** the **Khrysopege Church,** the **bazaar** and its museums, the **Archaeology and Ethnography Museum** (see p. 107) and **the Museum of Turkish Islamic Arts** (see p. 109). Bizarrely, the city is also famed for its Kirkpinar Greased Wrestling Contests held every year in June, but whether you consider this to be family entertainment is open to question, fun though it may be.

Iznik

The town of Iznik has a number of claims to fame, but probably the one that will interest your children the most is that it is the

Iznik tiles

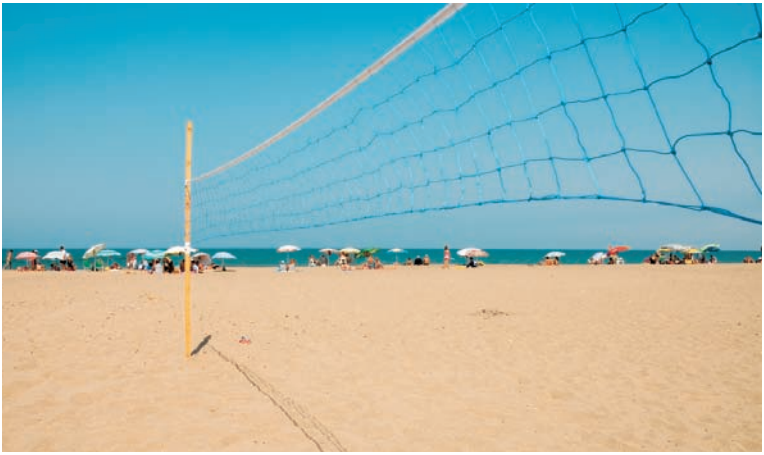
home to *pişmaniye* – a wonderfully sticky sweet that has layer upon layer of sugar that melts in the mouth. Iznik, founded around the year BC300 and considered an important religious site, is also famed for its intricate ceramic ware and glazed tiles (see p. 108). Originally made in Ottoman times, Iznik tiles have been used to decorate mosques and important buildings throughout Turkey for years, including the Sultanahmet Mosque (or the Blue Mosque as it is more commonly known because of the blue hue the tiles give its interior) in Istanbul (see p. 71). The town is also famous as the important Roman city of Nicomedia – also known as Nicaea. Today, it is more of an industrial centre for the Kocaeli district and, although having few attractions for visitors other than a beautifully presented 18th-century Ottoman mansion, the **Saatçi Ali Efendi Konak**, the remains of its **Roman walls**, the **Haghia Sophia** and the **Yeşil Mosque**, it does offer an insight into the daily life of locals. It's also a good place to stay for visiting neighbouring towns and cities, such as **Hereke** where some of the finest Turkish carpets are made, the beaches of **Yalova** (see p. 97) on the banks of the Sea of Marmara and the nearby town of **Elbeyli** where you and your family can visit a 5th-century catacomb.

Sakarya

A lively town, Sakarya is one of the most important tourist areas of the northern Marmara region. Its beaches, including the glorious **Karasu** and **Kocaali beaches**, face towards the Black Sea, with a backdrop of lush greenery. The area is known for its good choice of holiday resorts, along with smaller hotels, restaurants and cafés. In its centre, known as Adapazari, there is a small but interesting museum, the **Atatürk and Ethnography Museum** (*+90 264 276 20 91*), which displays personal belongings of Atatürk (1881–1938), the founder of the Turkish Republic. If your children are keen to learn more about Turkey's history then this museum is a good one to visit for an hour or so. Other notable places and attractions to see include the **Sapanca Lake shores**, the **Poyrazlar Lake** forest recreation areas at Orhan Gazi and the **Beşköprü Bridge** (see p. 105). From the centre of Sakarya it is easy to venture out into beautiful countryside for a family picnic and see several lakes, valleys and canyons along the way. The city of Sakarya gives its name to the region, through which the Sangarious River – often known as the Sakarya River – flows past a remarkably large number of vineyards.

Tekirdağ

Tekirdağ, with its beautiful examples of Ottoman architecture and broad beaches that stretch for miles either side of the city limits, is known for its



Karasu Beach

vineyards, wine festivals and, above all, its seemingly endless number of fields full of bright yellow sunflowers – a potential background for some lovely family photographs. The city of Tekirdağ lies on the northern side of the Sea of Marmara, and is known for its architecturally important building, the 16th-century **Rüstem Paşa Mosque**, built by the Grand Vizier of Süleyman the Magnificent. There are also a couple of impressive museums worth a second look: **the Archaeology and Ethnography Museum** (*+90 282 261 20 82*) tells the story of Tekirdağ and the immediate area through its collection of ceramics, gems and artefacts; and the **Rakoczi Museum** (*+90 282 263 85 77*), is the former home of Rakoczi Ferench II, a notable resident of the town in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Yalova

Yalova, a popular spot for holidaying visitors, lies on the banks of the Sea of Marmara not far from Bursa in one direction, Kocaeli in the other. Its beaches are outstanding and its coastline is especially characterful, with old buildings set among new. A little museum housed in the former summer residence of Atatürk known as the **Atatürk Mansion** (*+90 226 813 85 07*) has original furnishings from the early 20th century. Centuries ago, the town of Yalova was known as Helenapolis after the Emperor Constantine's mother Helena who was largely responsible for the design of the then important city; its basic layout remains to this day. The town is famed for its thermal springs, believed to heal ills, at Thermal, an elevated district of the city. Here, the **Yalova Thermal Complex** (*+90 226 675 7400*; ***http://bilisimpark.com/thermal/enter.swf***) has indoor and

outdoor pools and baths, plus a park, forest and restaurants. Even if you and your family don't wish to take a dip in the hot springs, a visit is worth the short drive uphill so you can enjoy a panoramic view of Yalova. Twenty minutes away, lies the quiet holiday resort of **Çinarcik** with its long stretches of sandy beach, tourist accommodation and a good choice of restaurants, so it's nice and convenient for a stop.

Best Beaches

Avsa Islands, Sea of Marmara

The Avsa Islands are a much sought-after holiday destination and a little bit select. Along with wide, sandy beaches and safe swimming waters, the islands are noted for their fine cuisine, vineyards and wine cellars. There's also a Byzantine monastery, the Meryem Ana Monastery, at Manastir that is worth a visit.

Biga Peninsula Beaches

Karabiga, Kemer and Sahmelek are the largest holiday centres along the Biga peninsula. Each has long stretches of beaches, plus a good selection of amenities such as restaurants and watersports. Nearby are hot springs.

Erdek Beach, Erdek

Your children will love this beach – it's long and sandy, and because it nestles alongside Erdek, one of the Sea of Marmara shore's busiest holiday resorts, there's every amenity needed for a day or two spent relaxing, building sandcastles or swimming in the sea. Restaurants and cafes are all child-friendly, offering menus suitable for small appetites, ice creams and juices, as well as providing facilities like high chairs, buggy stores and baby-changing areas.

Gulf of Edremit ★

A string of beaches and bays along the coastline of the Gulf of Edremit lie in the shadow of olive trees beside the holiday towns of Akçay, Edremit, Altinoluk, Ayvalik, Ören and Burhaniye, where restaurants make ideal stops if your children need to freshen up a bit and take a drink or snack.

Kerpe Beach

On the Black Sea coast, to the east of Istanbul and north of Iznik, long stretches of sandy beach can be found at Kerpe, Kovanağzi and Kefken. All have a good selection of small hotels in which to stay. Kerpe beach is especially child-friendly with fine sand and good swimming waters, plus small cafés as well as toilets a short walk away.

Kumla Beach, Gulf of Gemlik ★

A whole host of beautiful beaches and holiday resorts lie on the shores of the Sea of Marmara, among them is the wide and sandy Kumla Beach in the Gulf of Gemlik, a particular favourite. It has good facilities such as parking and restaurants with children's menus, and yet the beach manages to retain a relaxing feel. It is ideal for all the family. Others in the area include the beaches at Çinarcik,

Armutlu and Avsa Islands, Denizkent, Sarköy and Yalova.

Marble Beach, Marmara Islands ★

Lying off Erdek and Bandirma in the Sea of Marmara, the Marmara Islands offer a string of beautiful beaches. One in particular, Marble Beach, is famous for the natural marble that lies near the water's edge. There are also cafés and restaurants with special children's menus to make a day on the beach here comfortable and fun.

Mudanya Beach, Mudanya

The beach at Mudanya is long, wide and especially sandy. The numerous souvenir shops, restaurants and cafés that line the beach make this spot a bustling family holiday destination.

Natural Wonders & Spectacular Views

Kaz Dağı National Park ★★

Kaz Dağı National Park, Çanakkale.

An amazingly beautiful park, the Kaz Dağı National Park is known for its hot springs, parkland and landscape, including the Kaz Dağı mountain range. There are lots of picnic areas, camping sites and sport opportunities such as horse-riding through the countryside, bird-watching, cycling and walking along the many nature trails.

Marmara Islands ★

Famed for their marble, the Marmara Islands lie in the southern part of the Sea of Marmara and can be reached easily by boat or ferry from Erdek or Bandirma. The islands are unspoilt, relaxing and well worth a visit. **Marble Beach** (see p. 99) in particular is one of the prettiest beaches in the region and characterised by the chunks of marble that can be seen at its water's edge. It is a reminder of how important these islands were in Roman and Ottoman periods when their marble quarries provided the material for making lavish mosques and palaces. Today, the quarry has a display that shows the quarrying process. The islands have several little restaurants and cafés that offer play areas and children's facilities such as special menus, changing areas and buggy stores.

Saman Mountains

Lake Sapanca lies in a basin-like area created within the Saman Mountain range and is a popular spot with Istanbul residents keen to escape the city in the summer months for a day or a weekend break. Plush private residences line the lakeside, as do hotels and restaurants. The **Arifiye Forest** offers a pleasant backdrop and provides areas for family picnicking along with some outstanding panoramic views of the mountains and the great lake below. Nature trails and cycling routes are among the activities to enjoy.

Sea of Marmara

Enclosed by the mainland of the Marmara region, except for two straits at either end – the Bosphorus Strait, which divides

Büyükada: the largest of the Princes' Islands

Istanbul in half, and the Dardanelle Straits – the Sea of Marmara links the Aegean Sea with the Black Sea. It is around 11,500 sq. km in size and lies in the heart of the region, south of Istanbul. The Sea of Marmara has several collections of islands, including the Princes' Islands (see p. 100), to which ferries run regularly from Istanbul, and the Marmara Islands (see p. 99), famed for their marble, just off Erdek and Bandirma to the south. Stop awhile at any of the towns and cities that nestle alongside the Sea of Marmara, an important shipping route, such as Tekirdağ or Yalova (see p. 96) and see the huge ships on their way between Europe and Asia.

The Princes' Islands ★

The Princes' Islands lie a short hop from the quayside at Sirkeçi (see p. 57) in Istanbul in the Sea of Marmara. There are nine of them altogether, the largest of which is **Buyuk Ada** (Büyükada). You and your children will love this island because it's quiet and safe so playing is unrestricted. There are sandy beaches, plus row upon row of pretty, brightly painted wooden houses to see. The Art Nouveau style houses look as though they should be on a film set. Significantly, no cars are allowed on Buyuk Ada so travel is by horse-drawn carriage only. Take a carriage as soon as you go ashore to get acquainted with the island – it's fun, a great way to see the sights and your children probably won't let you leave the quayside without taking a carriage anyway. The boats from Istanbul also stop at some of the other islands. From Sirkeçi in Istanbul they also go to **Kadikoy, Burgaz Adasi** and **Heybeliada** before finally arriving at Buyuk Ada.

INSIDER TIP

Motor vehicles, other than official ones, are not allowed on any of the Princes' Islands so be prepared to hire a horse-drawn carriage or a cycle. If neither of these appeal then be sure to take good walking shoes.

Nature Reserves, Parks & Gardens

Koza Park, Bursa ★

Koza Park, Atatürk Caddesi, Bursa.

Located not far from Cumhuriyet Square, or Heykel as it is known locally, in Bursa, Koza Park offers the chance for youngsters to play and unwind with swings, slides and climbing frames. Of course, as always, keep a close eye on your children as they play on such amenities for safety. It has a real fun atmosphere, especially on hot, sunny summer days. There are restaurants and cafes with outdoor eating areas, along with lawns, flower arrangements and fountains. Just behind it is the Koza Han, a spectacular building that once was the home of Bursa's famous silk trade and is now a popular arcade-style thoroughfare for traders to display their goodies, while a short walk away is the city's busy 16th-century bazaar where your children will love to haggle for a souvenir to take home. There are all sorts of items on offer, from Turkish Delight, the jelly-like sweet, to pretty coloured beads and little ceramic dishes that would look great on a little girl's bedroom table.

Kuş Cenneti National Park, Balikesir

Kuş Cenneti National Park, Bandirma, Balikesir.

It is said there are well over 250 different species of birds living in the Kuş Cenneti National Park close to the Lake Manyas in the Bandirma district of Balikesir, along with countless animals. This sprawling national park is home to ducks, flamingos,

Spot a dalmatian pelican in the Kuş Cenneti National Park

pelicans and spoonbills. If your children and teenagers are keen on wildlife, and in particular birds, then a visit should be a must on the agenda. Considered an important bird sanctuary, the Kuş Cenneti National Park was established in 1938 by the German zoologist Curt Crosswig. Although there are few amenities other than picnic areas and a tea room, it does offer the chance to explore the area, to see the birds from observation points and to visit its small **ornithological museum**. The park is around 20 kms or so from Bandirma in the Balikesir area. Although sign-posted from Bandirma and Balikesir, the network of small roads leading to the park makes it easy to miss a sign. Keep a close look out and finding the park should be trouble-free.

National Park of Gelibolu Peninsula, Çanakkale ★

National Park of Gelibolu Peninsula, Eceabat, Çanakkale. +90 286 814 10 25.

A remarkable park that manages to combine a sense of serenity with being a place to enjoy as a family, the National Park of Gelibolu Peninsula at Çanakkale has long stretches of sandy beaches, beautifully clear and safe waters, cliffs and large areas of parkland and woodland to enjoy. Significantly, as a monument created to honour the 500,000 or so soldiers who lost their lives in the Gelibolu, or Gallipoli, battle in 1915, it also has outstanding memorials, cemeteries, gardens and monuments, including one that dominates the headland, as well as a huge salt lake, the **Tuz Gölü**, which attracts birdlife and wildlife. Lying as close as it does to some good beaches, a visit to the park could make an ideal afternoon excursion when your children have had enough of building sandcastles or need a break from the sun.

Uludağ National Park ★

Uludağ National Park, Bursa.

In summer, the Uludağ National Park is a wilderness of countryside, nature trails and picnic areas located in the foothills of the great Uludağ Mountain range, a 50-minute drive from Bursa. A handful of restaurants such as the Monte Baia Restaurant give the chance of a welcome break. If your family likes to get away from it all then this is the place to head to. Keen twitchers will be happy as many species of birds call the area home including, if you're lucky enough to see one, the Tengmalm's Owl – a very rare local bird in Turkey – along with species of raptor, butterflies, alpine meadows and forest areas. In winter, the Uludağ National Park is probably best known for its excellent **skiing** (see p. 110). There are ski schools, cable cars and slopes for all levels from beginners through to advanced skiers, so if you're visiting in the winter months this is the ideal place to head with your family.

Yildiz Park, Bursa ★★ VALUE

Yildiz Park Tea Gardens, Yildiz Park, Bursa.

Located in the Muradiye area of Bursa, the Yildiz Park hosts a sprawling parkland area, where your children will delight in being able to run and play, with a boating lake providing the chance to enjoy water-based activities. Within the grounds is the famous **Yildiz Park Tea Gardens** where light snacks, desserts, coffee and cold drinks are among the things on the menu to enjoy. Several noted buildings are nearby, including the 15th-century **Mosque of Sultan Murat II** and some tombs, and the small **Ottoman House Museum**, housed in the 18th-century former home of a local resident, with displays depicting how the rich Ottomans might have lived.

Historic Buildings & Monuments

Bigali Castle, Kilitbahir Castle and Seddul Bahir Castle, Çanakkale ★★

Located on the shore where the Aegean Sea meets the Dardanelle Straights.

These three castles are probably best observed from the sea as you approach Çanakkale heading towards the Sea of Marmara through the Dardanelle Straits. All Ottoman fortresses, they should capture the imagination of your children a treat. Bigali Castle lies to the north, Seddul Bahir Castle to the south, and in the middle is the mighty Kilitbahir Castle, widely considered one of the finest examples of Ottoman castle construction in the area. It was built in the 15th century by Fatih Sultan Mehmet and features a cloverleaf-shaped inner courtyard. Not all areas of the castle are open to the public, and those that are have opening times that vary considerably depending on the time of year. It is a good idea to call in to the tourist information office in Çanakkale (see p. 86) for the latest opening times during your stay.

Mosque of the Three Balconies, the Eski Mosque, Muradiye Mosque and the Beyazit II, Edirne

The Mosque of the Three Balconies, Hükümet Caddesi; Old Mosque, Talat Paşa Asfalti; The Muradiye Mosque, Küçükpazar Caddesi; Beyazit II, Yeni Maharet Caddesi on the outskirts of Edirne.

These four mosques are among the 'must-see' attractions of Edirne, although again your younger children may need a few breaks to ice-cream shops or the park between visits. To them the mosques will probably appear to be much the same, although to the adult eye they are quite different. The **Muradiye Mosque**, for instance, stands in a quiet part of Edirne away from the hustle and bustle of the city centre. It dates from around the 15th century: look out for its inscriptions. **The Mosque of the Three Balconies** is noted for its innovative design and open courtyard that was something of

a first when it was built in the late 15th century. The **Beyazit II** is known for its section dedicated to the history of health and is open as a museum with displays of medicinal and health paraphernalia. The **Eski Mosque**, or Old Mosque, is, as its name suggests, one of the oldest in the city and is styled on the Great Mosque of Bursa. Get your children to count the number of domed sections.

Selimiye Mosque, Edirne ★

Selimiye Mosque, Minar Sinan Caddesi, Edirne.

A massive structure, the Selimiye Mosque is the city of Edirne's focal point – it dominates the cityscape and can be seen for miles. Designed by Sinan in the 16th century on the orders of the then sultan, Sultan Selim II, it appears to defy gravity with windows that look as if they are holding up much of the structure. Sinan, a noted architect of the Ottoman period, must have known his stuff though as it shows no signs of falling down. Your children should enjoy a visit because it is an impressive building of Islamic architecture. Look out for its four minarets, its massive dome that measures almost 150m across and its lavish interior. While it is polite to talk in hushed tones when visiting a mosque so as not to disturb anyone who may be in prayer, locals are used to visitors and welcome children although may frown upon boisterous behaviour. The mosque lies amid a complex of other outstanding buildings dating from the Ottoman period.

The Acropolis of Assos, Behramkale ★★

The Acropolis of Assos, on the headland at Behramkale.

The Acropolis of Assos is an outstanding ancient monument that is affectionately known as the Guardian of the Gulf of Edremit and the Biga Peninsula. It looms high on a headland overlooking the Aegean Sea at Behramkale, which lies just to the south of

Acropolis of Assos, Behramkale

Çanakkale in the southernmost part of the Marmara region. It stands on the site of the **Temple of Athena**, which dates back to around the 6th century BC. You can take your children to see the remains of its theatre, a mosque, bridge and its gymnasium, and they can explore the remains of a fortress too. Your boys, especially, will love the chance to play at soldiers, keeping guard over advancing seafaring invaders. Be aware that some of the surfaces are uneven so buggy access can be a bit tricky. If your family is into arts and crafts then head off into **Assos town**, where local artisans display their wares, selling everything from embroidery to silk scarves, and wooden inlaid boxes to jewellery made from beads in every conceivable colour. Your youngsters will no doubt find the perfect souvenir to take home.

***Open** usually 9am–5pm daily summer, but can vary. Check with local tourist information office before making a long journey. **Admission** expect to pay a small entrance fee of a few lira.*

The Beşköprü Bridge, Adapazari ★★ FIND

Adapazari, Sakarya.

The architecturally beautiful Beşköprü Bridge, which dates from around the year 553 AD, spans the Sangarious River, or the Sakarya River as it is often known, near Adapazari, Sakarya. Built by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, it has a series of eight arches that give it a distinctive look. While you and your family probably won't spend much time here, it is worth taking a detour en route to, perhaps, Iznik, Bursa or Kocali, just to see it. The bridge is particularly photogenic so if your older children are keen on photography or painting then they might like to add a few pictures of this attractive structure to their collection.

The Beşköprü Bridge is a little hidden, but if you head for Adapazari and take the road signposted to the river you should be able to find it. If all else fails visit the tourist information office in nearby Sakarya, which will be able to tell you exactly where it is. From this office it is only a drive of 25 minutes or so.

Tophane Citadel and the Tombs of Osman and Orhan Gazi, Bursa

Tophane Citadel and the Tombs of Osman and Orhan Gazi, Ullu Cami Caddesi, Bursa.

The historic citadel walls of Bursa, which date from the Byzantine period, can be seen from a little tearoom reached by a series of steps from Atatürk Caddesi, one of the city's main thoroughfares. Of course, your youngsters will probably want to walk along the top, which can be done in one remarkably well-preserved section to the north of the city, although you might find the building a little difficult to access with a buggy or wheelchair. Here a park, complete with cafes where you can eat al fresco style, has been created on top of the walls. The **Tophane clocktower**, a landmark structure of Bursa, stands in the park

area too, as do the **Tombs of Osman and Orhan Gazi**, the father and son who founded the Ottoman expansion.

***Open** 10am–5pm depending on the time of year. **Admission** free.*

Ulu Cami, Muradiye Mosque and Yeşil Camii, Bursa

Located in the marketplace, Murat II Caddesi and Yesil Caddesi respectively.

Bursa has a number of historic mosques for you and your family to visit and, while they may not be the obvious attraction for children, they are an integral part of the Turkish way of life. Children will probably find them of interest because they may never have entered a mosque at home. The **Ulu Cami**, sometimes known as the Great Mosque or the magnificent Mosque, is located in the very heart of Bursa's historic market place area. It dates from the 14th century and is one of the finest examples of its style of architecture in this area. The 15th-century **Muradiye Mosque** is noted for the fact that it stands in landscaped gardens in one of the leafiest areas of the city, the upmarket residential area of Muradiye, while the **Yeşil Camii,** or the Green Mosque, is considered a landmark building. Among the other mosques to see are the **Emir Sultan Mosque**, the **Yildirim Beyazit Mosque** and the **Alaeddin Mosque**, the oldest in the city. If your older children and teenagers are keen to learn more about Bursa and its long history then visiting some or all of these mosques would prove interesting for them, although they may not be particularly appropriate for very young children who may prefer to play games in the gardens.

INSIDER TIP

Be prepared to remove your shoes and cover your shoulders before you enter a mosque. Remember that if you're wearing a skirt or shorts you may be asked to wear a cloak – most mosques provide one for your visit. Respect those at private prayer and talk in soft tones during your visit.

Yenişehir, near Bursa ★★

It is worth taking the 50-minute trip out to Yenişehir if you are staying in the area around Bursa. Here you can see some of the traditional-style houses that date back centuries. While children may not always appreciate architectural styles, they should love these because they are highly patterned and colourful, rather like dolls' houses but full size. There are a handful of places to eat and refresh, and a little museum, the **Semaki Mansion**, housed in a former residential house dating from the 1700s, gives an insight into the local lifestyle years ago. Yenişehir is well signposted from Bursa.

The Top Museums

Archaeological Museum, Bursa ★

Archaeological Museum, Kültür Park, Bursa. +90 224 234 49 18.

Your boys, especially, will love the ceremonial armour on display at Bursa's interesting Archaeological Museum in Kültür Park. There are also statues and glassware dating from Roman times, pieces of ceramic, tools and weaponry that are believed to have come from the periods leading up to the Ottoman times, finds dating from the Ottoman period itself and numerous Byzantine objects. The well-preserved old coins are especially interesting.

Open *8am–5pm daily, closed Mon.* ***Admission*** *5 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *toilets.*

Archaeology and Ethnography Museum, Edirne

Archaeology and Ethnography Museum, Selimiye Camii Yanı, Kadir Paşa Mektep Sok, Edirne. *+90 284 225 11 20.*

If you and your family are enthusiasts of ancient history then this museum is worth a visit. Children will enjoy the toy section but it also has a quite extensive collection of clothing, hats and shoes, plus other personal items like bags and even hair clips, books and household exhibits on display, most of which date from between prehistoric and Byzantine times. There is also a section devoted to the Ottoman period with a good collection of artefacts to see.

Open *8am–5pm daily, closed Mon.* ***Admission*** *5 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *toilets.*

Çanakkale Archaeological Museum ★★ VALUE

Çanakkale Archaeological Museum, Barbaros Mah. 100. Yil Caddesi, Çanakkale. *+90 286 217 65 65.*

As the area around Çanakkale is one of the most historic in the whole of Turkey, it follows that its archaeological museum must be full to bursting with fascinating exhibits, which is exactly the case. Comprising five large halls, it has displays of, it seems, everything from household pots, coins and glassware to remains of buildings, tools, weapons and children's toys. In the first hall as you step inside there are displays that explain the original location of the ancient city, along with wooden exhibits and a fine collection of ceramics dating from around the 17th century to almost the present day. Çanakkale was, at one time, an important producer of ceramics so it is right that the museum celebrates this in style. Your children, even the younger ones, should find the miniature bowls and jugs interesting. They sit alongside household pots, plates and dishes in varying shades of brown, green and yellow. Hall 2 displays ancient fossils, pots and axes found in the local area, some dating from prehistoric times. Again, your children will find these fascinating, especially the bones of dinosaurs. Many of the items were believed to have been used by the ancient Troia civilisation, and include pieces that might have, at one time, been the playthings of children. Hall 3 is dedicated to finds from the Hellenistic periods and Bozcaada necropolis of 700 to 200 BC while Hall 4 has ruins from the Dardanos tumulus of 600 to 200 BC and Hall 5 has arts from Assos, Behramkale. If you visit no

other museum during your stay in Turkey, be sure to include the Çanakkale Archaeological Museum in your schedule. It really does have something for everyone and you could easily spend a day here. Fortunately its restaurant has a menu designed not only for tired mums and dads, but lively youngsters with big appetites too; ice cream in various flavours is high on the list of temptations.

Open *8.30am–5pm Tues–Sun.* ***Admission*** *8 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *restaurant, shop, toilets.*

Iznik Museum, Bursa ★★

Iznik Museum, Müze Caddesi, Iznik, Bursa. *+90 224 754 10 27.*

Noted for its celebration of the skills of Ottoman artisans who created the intricate blue and white pottery seen throughout Turkey, the Iznik Museum lies opposite the Yesil Camii in Iznik in what was once believed to be one of Sultan Murat I's soup kitchens. While plates, dishes and goblets were made by craftsmen, it is probably the Iznik wall tiles that are the most famous. They adorn many private dwellings in the country, as well as a large number of its palaces and mosques. The 17th-century **Sultanahmet Mosque** in Istanbul, otherwise and more famously known as the Blue Mosque, acquired its nickname specifically because of the Iznik tiles that cover almost every surface of its interior and give it a blue glow. The **museum** has an impressive collection of Iznik works inside, and more in its large gardens. Children are likely to be drawn to the many miniature versions of bowls and plates, while the gardens provide a break for them between viewing the collections.

Open *8am–5pm daily, closed Mon.* ***Admission*** *6 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *shop, toilets.*

Söğüt Museum, Bilecik ★ FIND

The Söğüt Museum, Ertuğrul Gazi Caddesi, Söğüt, Bilecik. *+90 228 361 36 94.*

The Söğüt Museum in the pretty town of Söğüt in the Sakarya Valley tells the fascinating story of how the residents of Bilecik lived during the Ottoman Empire. A collection of pictures, garments, household items, weaponry and other artefacts found locally is on display. Children tend to be irresistibly drawn towards the series of life-size busts of famous figures from Turkey's history. The museum plays a significant role during the Ertuğrul Gazi commemoration festival (see p. 91) held every year in the late summer.

Open *9am–6pm daily, closed Mon.* ***Admission*** *5 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *toilets.*

The Atatürk and Ethnography Museum, Adapazari, Sakarya ★

The Atatürk and Ethnography Museum, Adapazari, Sakarya.

Although quite small, the Atatürk and Ethnography Museum in Adapazari, the centre of Sakarya, offers an interesting insight into the life and times of Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic.

Among its collections are personal belongings of Atatürk, such as garments and household goods, along with artefacts found locally around Sakarya. This museum is well worth visiting if your children are keen to learn more about Turkey and how it became a republic.

Open *8am–5pm daily, closed Mon.* ***Admission*** *5 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *cafe, toilets.*

Turkish Islamic Art Museum

Turkish Islamic Art Museum, Selimiye Camii Yanı, Kadir Paşa Mektep Sok, Edirne. *+90 284 225 11 20.*

Edirne's Turkish Islamic Art Museum is located within its great Selimiye Mosque in Minar Sinan Caddesi in the centre of the city. On display are glassware, weapons, manuscripts and examples of calligraphy that date back to the Ottoman times, and of which Edirne is especially proud. Look out for some fine examples of shields used in battle. There's also a room dedicated to the somewhat alarming local sport of grease wrestling, whereby participants don very little clothing, usually just leather shorts, and cover themselves in oil, parade across a showground and then start the fight. Apparently it has taken place for centuries, although whether it will give your youngsters nightmares or not is questionable. Best to take a peek first before letting them see the exhibits.

Open *8.30am–5.30pm daily, closed Mon.* ***Admission*** *5 YTL.* ***Amenities*** *toilets.*

Arts & Crafts

Edirne Crafts

The city of Edirne is famous for its crafts. Around its streets, especially the tiny, narrow alleys that form the **Kaleiçi**, or old quarter, of the city, artisans craft in little workshops. Among the most popular local products are the beautiful embroidery work on garments, cushions and tablecloths, ceramics and earthenware pots, woven baskets and pastries. Look out for *hardaliye* too, a mix of grape juice, mustard and marzipan, it tastes rather better than it sounds.

Iznik Crafts

The town of Iznik is famous for its intricately designed creamy white and blue pottery that dates way back to Ottoman times and appears in private residences, palaces and mosques throughout Turkey, most famously perhaps in the Sultanahmet Mosque, or Blue Mosque, in Istanbul. Today, Iznik has a handful of artisans who strive to capture the designs in little workshops. Purchasing a small bowl, cup, lamp or plate would make a lovely and highly unusual souvenir to take home.

Child-friendly Tours

Children will love the chance to take a **horse-drawn carriage ride** around the island of Buyak Ada (Büyükada), one of nine islands that together form the Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara off the south Istanbul coastline (see p. 100); they leave from the quayside on demand. You can see the

lovely beaches, the attractions such as the 6th-century **Aya Yorgi Church and Monastery**, the **Ayios Dimitrios Church** and the **Hamidiye Mosque**, and your children will delight in seeing the rows of little Art Nouveau style wooden houses that characterise the island.

For Active Families

Skiing in Uludağ

If you and your family adore winter sports then you will be spoilt for choice in the large, bustling resort of Uludağ in the Uludağ National Park (see p. 102). Lying on the slopes of the Uludağ Mountain not far from Bursa, the resort offers skiing for all levels including novice and challenging slopes, along with a ski school, cable cars and other sports such as tobogganing. It is the largest winter sports centre in Turkey. There are restaurants with menus to suit youngsters, plus a good range of hotels (see p. 111). Almost all welcome children, although one or two specialise in accommodation for adults only.

Watersports

The **Marmara region** is wonderful for families keen on watersports. All the resorts along the Sea of Marmara offer water activities of some sort, and then you have further opportunities if staying or visiting the Black Sea resorts or around the Bosphorus in Istanbul or the Dardenelle Straits around Çanakkale. Even inland the various lakes have boating, waterskiing and windsurfing.

Shopping

Part of the fun in experiencing life in Turkey is to go shopping in its bazaars, where you can buy everything from books and pots

Belly-dancing outfits on sale at the Grand Bazaar Kapali Carsi

to garments, toys and souvenirs. Iznik-style blue and white pottery is a popular purchase in the Marmara region, as is *pişmaniye*, the super sweet and sticky confectionery made of layer upon layer of sugar. Carpets are always a good purchase too, although if you're on a family holiday these are probably not towards the top of your shopping list. Children will love the chance to haggle and get a bargain, although even the shyest little one will be able to secure a good buy without too much effort. Turkish stallholders adore children and will no doubt offer yours a good price before they even ask.

INSIDER TIP

When you're out shopping always try to pay in cash as you will be able to get a better price. Credit cards are not generally accepted in bazaars or small shops.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

Prices quoted are for a double room in low season.

INEXPENSIVE

Hotel Maşukiye ★★ VALUE

*Soğuksu Mah. Sarmaşık Sok. No.18, 41295 Maşukiye, Kocaeli. +90 262 354 21 74; **www.hotelmasukiye.com**. Located centrally in the village of Maşukiye, near Kocaeli, on the easterly coastline of the Sea of Marmara.*

A traditionally built hotel located beside a small river, the Soğuksu, and Lake Sapanca in the Sakarya valley area, the Hotel Maşukiye is a private family-run establishment in the quiet village of Maşukiye. The hospitality is good and the welcome warm. The hotel caters for children and the team is only too happy to provide buggies, cycles for all sizes and extra beds, and, it seems, anything else needed to make your stay a memorable one. A playground with safety features such as a special floor surface is provided in the garden. The hotel's rooms, which are located over several floors, are nicely presented and have views of either the mountains or the huge lake that surrounds the building. The Hotel Maşukiye caters for breakfast only, but the village has some fine dining restaurants all within a short walking distance. Be sure to try the local delicacy, trout. The hotel is also well placed for a few other activities. Walking is popular because of the altitude and there are some pre-marked trails, as is cycling and watersports on Lake Sapanca, which all the family will love for sure. Fishing in the streams is another option if your family is keen and there are many picnic areas to choose from to enjoy your catch.

***Rooms** 10 including a family suite. **Rates** from around 70 YTL. **Credit** not accepted. **Amenities** wake up call, laundry service, breakfast restaurant, bar, parking, garden, children's playground, television room. **In room** en suite bathroom, balcony, satellite TV, Internet.*

MODERATE

Merit Halki Palace ★★ FIND

Refah Şehitleri Street, Heybeliada. Princes' Islands, +90 216 351 00 25, www.halkipalacehotel.com. Located on the Princes' Island of Heybeliada overlooking the coast not far from the quayside ferry terminal.

This is among the finest hotels on Heybeliada, one of the Princes' Islands that lies in the Sea of Marmara. It is housed in an attractive, historic chateau-style building made of wood and painted in bright colours, which should amuse your children no end. It was originally built by a school to house visiting parents. Despite a turbulent past, when it suffered a fire and subsequent rebuilding in part to an authentic style, it retains its reputation as a popular holiday and business centre. The hotel stands in gardens with play areas for children, table tennis, and a swimming pool complete with an area designed for younger, more inexperienced swimmers. The hotel is located close to the forest that characterises Heybeliada, where there are nature trails to follow, cycles to hire and horse-riding amenities, and is a good base from which to explore the island, its neighbouring islands or the mainland with your family.

Its traditionally presented indoor and outdoor restaurants serve Turkish and European-style cuisine, with a special menu of smaller versions for children. There's a good selection of ice creams and sticky desserts too, plus a patisserie on site.

***Rooms** 36 bedrooms plus 9 suites with jacuzzi. **Rates** from around 125 YTL. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** outdoor swimming pool, lobby lounge and bar, patisserie, indoor and outdoor restaurants, snack bar, TV room, laundry service. Children's day care available, cots, high chairs and buggies supplied on request. Special restaurant menus for children. Access for disabled guests. **In room** A/C, en-suite bathroom, TV. Suites also have jacuzzi.*

EXPENSIVE

Grand Yazici Hotel ★★

Oteller 1 Gelişm Bölgesi, Uludağ, Bursa. +90 224 285 20 56; www.silkroadhotels.com/grandyazici.htm. Location in central Uludağ and within the Uludağ National Park, near the city of Bursa.

This hotel caters very much for the skiing enthusiasts who flock to the region in the winter months because of its exceptional ski slopes and amenities. Close by is a ski school, slopes for beginners through to experienced, ski lifts and restaurants. In summer the Uludağ National Park offers outstanding country living. The Grand Yazici Hotel itself is a modern building with echoes of alpine chalet style, albeit on a large scale. It stands surrounded by pine trees in a fairytale setting. Within the hotel there is a health suite with a gymnasium, spa, swimming pool, Turkish bath and sauna among its facilities on offer. If your children fancy taking part in aerobics sessions or trying their hand at basketball, then they will be able to do so at the Grand Yazici. In terms of dining,

the hotel has a patisserie, snack bars and a couple of restaurants specialising in international cuisine with many traditional Turkish dishes offered too. The hotel welcomes children and, as such, offers a good menu designed especially with smaller appetites in mind.

Rooms *260, including 13 suites and 9 family rooms.* ***Rates*** *from around 500 YTL depending on the season. More expensive in skiing season.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *health suite with spa and sauna, swimming pool, restaurants, cots, buggies, high chairs available on request, babysitting service available, laundry service, parking.* ***In room*** *TV, en-suite bathroom.*

FAMILY-FRIENDLY DINING

INEXPENSIVE

Kenan Çorba ve Izgara Salonu ★★ FIND

Atatürk Caddesi, Iznik, +90 224 757 02 35. Located just a short walk from the Haghia Sophia mosque in the centre of Iznik.

This is a bright and breezy sort of restaurant. It's not lavishly decorated, but then neither is it dull. It is traditional, the staff are friendly and helpful and the food plentiful. It does have an à la carte-style menu with grilled meats, salads, local dishes such as *bamya bastisi*, a type of stew made with lamb and tomatoes, and a vast variety of kebabs from which to choose. Your children will probably be familiar with *dönar* kebabs (sliced meat) and *şiş* kebabs (cubes of meat on skewers) from home, but the ones freshly prepared and cooked at the Kenan Çorba ve Izgara Salonu eaterie are likely to look and taste quite a bit different. It's all to do with the spices. If your children aren't keen on 'hot' tastes it might be a good idea to sample some meat first before placing a big order.

Open *12pm–late.* ***Main Courses*** *8 to 12 YTL with drinks.*

MODERATE

Yusuf Restoran ★★ FIND

Kültür Park, Bursa. +90 224 234 49 67. Located in Kültür Park, the Cultural Park, in the centre of Bursa.

A good stopping-off point if visiting the main sights of Bursa, such as its mosques, citadel or its Archaeological Museum (see p. 106), the Yusuf Restoran nestles in a lovely private part of the Kültür Park. Although you may think it is Bursa's best kept secret because of its location, you would be wrong, because as regular as clockwork it will be full to the brim with families eating and having fun. You can eat inside but inevitably on warm summer days and evenings, diners can be seen sitting at the stylish little tables and chairs on its terrace and in its garden. The food is pure family-friendly, which although sounding a bit of a cliché is actually quite true. Mezes are the Yusuf Restoran's speciality, which means that a series of tiny dishes are brought to your table with all manner of local dishes, grilled meats, fries, vegetables, salads and dips waiting

to be sampled. As mezes usually consist of around 20 to 25 dishes, there should be something for even the fussiest small appetite. There is a special menu for children too if you don't fancy a meze.

***Open** 12pm–11pm. **Main Courses** 15 YTL for an average meze meal. **Amenities** children's menu, high chairs on request, good wheelchair access.*

INSIDER TIP

Be sure to try some apple or mint tea during your stay in Turkey. Usually served in little tulip-shaped glass cups with a saucer, it is refreshing and thirst-quenching.

EXPENSIVE

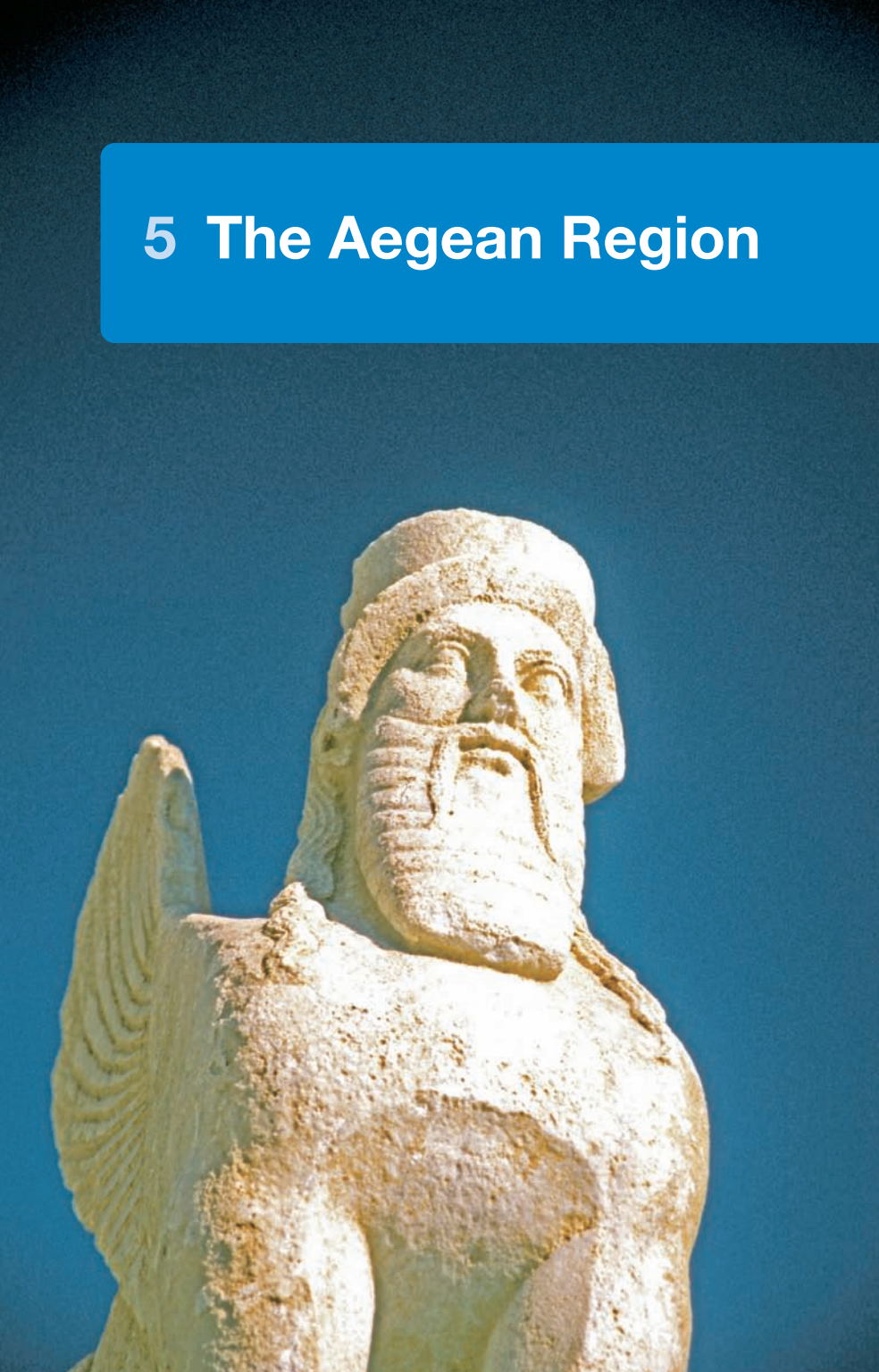
Birtat ★★ FIND

Gülistan Caddesi 10, Buyak Ada (Büyükada), Princes' Islands. +90 216 382 68 41. Located a short walk from the quayside.

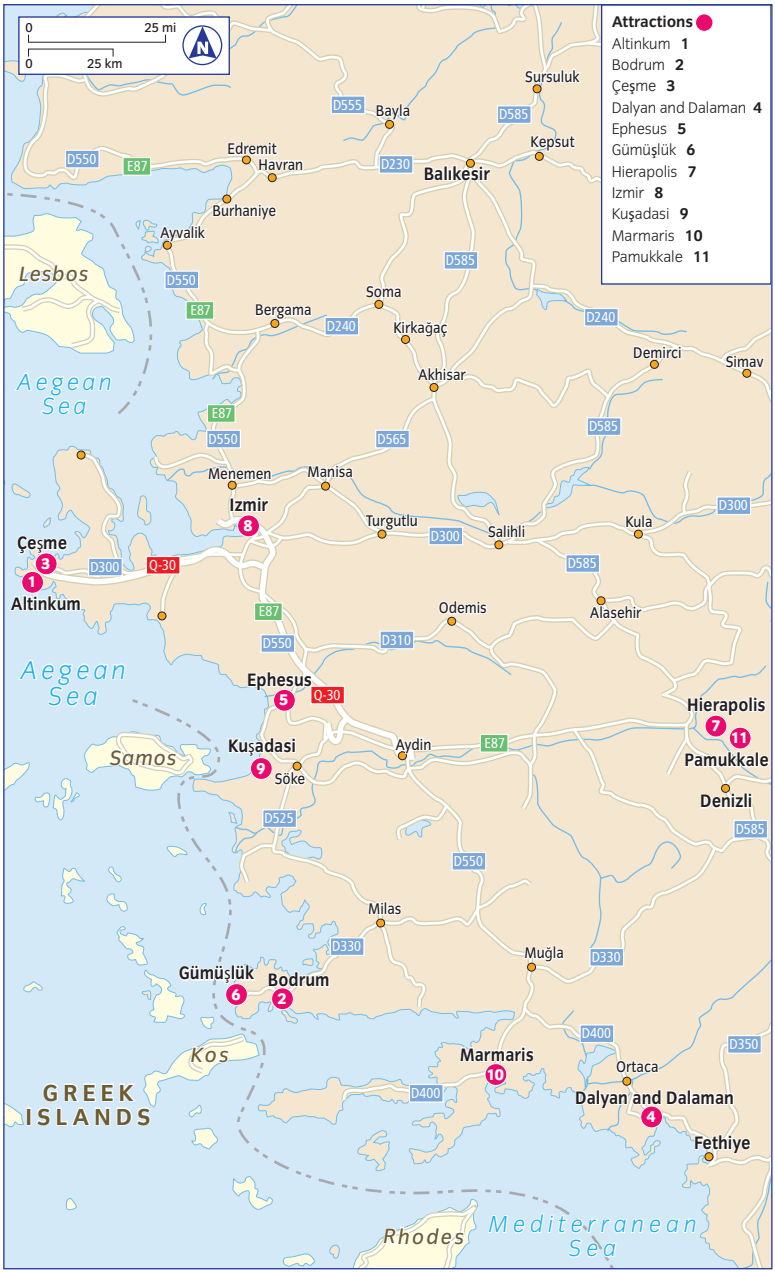
You could easily spend a day on Buyak Ada (Büyükada), taking in its relaxing atmosphere, seeing its lovely old wooden houses and trotting around the roads in a horse-drawn carriage. What this means is that you will want something good and wholesome to eat during the day. On Buyak Ada (Büyükada) you will be spoilt for choice when it comes to restaurants. Most are located around the pier and quayside areas, and one of the best is Birtat. Specialising in fish dishes, although with lots of local and European-style meat dishes served too, plus, of course, mezes of what appears to be a never-ending parade of tiny dishes, the Birtat will have something to suit all tastes for sure. It has special menus tailored for children too, and a great dessert selection, so everyone will be very happy indeed. The restaurant has high chairs and an area to store buggies, and has also provided easy access for wheelchairs. It tends to be open only for lunches, but such meals do seem to stretch well into the afternoon due to the combination of delicious food and the chance to sit outside in the sunshine and take in the atmosphere of Buyak Ada – if your little ones allow it of course.

***Open** noon to around 3pm. **Prices** average grilled fish dish with wine around 20 to 25 YTL. More if you try a large helping of baklava with ice cream. **Amenities** children's menu, high chairs, buggy store, wheelchair access.*

5 The Aegean Region



AEGEAN REGION



Turkey has some beautiful coastlines dotted with coves and lined with sandy beaches, combined with landscapes that range from rugged mountains to lush forests of olive and pine trees. Some of the most impressive examples of each can be found here beside the Aegean Sea.

The Aegean region stretches from the Burhaniye, just south of Çanakkale that lies alongside the Marmara region, and the town of Ayvalik and Bergama on the southern coast of Edremit Bay, through to the lively Dalaman peninsula in the south.

Along the way are major towns, cities and holiday centres. Among them is historic **Foça**, **Çeşme**, famed for its spring waters and superb beaches, **Selçuk**, an important religious and tourist town, the bustling commercial centre of **Izmir** and the hugely popular beach resorts of **Kuşadasi**, **Bodrum**, **Marmaris** and **Altinkum** where almost every possible attraction can be found to keep your children, whatever their ages, amused for hours.

Along the coastline are strings of beaches, many classed as Blue Flag beaches so you know you are safe to let your children play in the sands and swim in the waters.

Inland are the historic cities of **Uşak**, **Denizli** and **Kütahya**. Two of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Temple of Artemis at **Ephesus**, itself one of the best-preserved cities of the ancient world, and King Mausoleus's Tomb in **Bodrum** are found in the Aegean region as are the important ancient cities of **Pergamum** and **Hierapolis**. At **Hierapolis** you can even take a bath in the thermal springs, leaning against columns and statues.

The Aegean also has some memorable sights such as **Pamukkale**, one of Turkey's most famous attractions, where a series of terraces, known as the Travertine Cascades, have been created by hot spring deposits of limestone that have formed into steps over centuries.

Dalyan is known for its mud baths and its protected Iztuzu beach, which is a nesting ground for the endangered caretta caretta turtle.

The Aegean region is one of, if not *the* most popular area for holidaying families and, as such, it has what seems an endless number of hotels, holiday resorts, attractions and restaurants that are specifically designed with children in mind. There certainly won't be any shortage of things to do or places to stay.

ESSENTIALS

Getting There

By Plane The Aegean region is probably the easiest area to reach in Turkey after Istanbul from destinations in Europe and beyond. It is served by three international airports into which many charter airlines, **British Airways**, **Turkish Airlines** and schedule airlines fly, such as **Thomas Cook**, **Atlas Jet**,

and **Thomson** (see p. 34). The **Izmir Adnan Menderes International Airport** at Izmir (*www.adnanmenderesairport.com*) serves the north of the region, while the **Bodrum-Milas Havaalani Airport** is at Milas, about 32km (20 miles) away from Bodrum (*+90 252 523 01 01*) and the **Dalaman Airport** (*+90 252 792 55 55 www.atmairport.aero/Dalaman_en/index.php*) at Dalaman serve the south, along with some parts of the Mediterranean region.

Havas (*+90 212 444 50 00*) provides bus transfers from all airports.

By Bus and Rail The major towns and cities of the Aegean region are well served by intercity buses that run an efficient system. There are three main bus companies that have head offices in Istanbul. You can obtain information about all the routes from the Istanbul office.

The three largest bus companies are:

Kâmil Koç, Istanbul *+90 212 658 20 00*; Bursa *+90 242 261 50 00*.

Ulusoy, Istanbul *+90 212 471 71 00*, *www.ulusoy.com.tr*.

Varan, Istanbul *+90 212 251 74 74*, *www.varan.com.tr*).

The Aegean region is also served by trains operated by the **Turkish State Railway**, the TCDD (*www.tcdd.gov.tr*), see p. 35.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Tourist Information Offices

The coastline of the Aegean is easy to navigate despite having more than its fair share of peninsulas, but even most of the inland towns and cities can be reached easily via the area's good road network. Take care on some of the more scenic routes however as they tend not to be well signposted and have few amenities. Before setting off on a journey it is a good idea to gather as much information and as many local maps as possible, and as the region has some 20 or so tourist information offices, there will not be a shortage of either.

Akçay (Edremit)
Akçay Caddesi, 1 Sok 1, Akçay, *+90 266 384 11 13*

Aydin
Veysi Paşa Mah., Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi No 1, Aydin, *+90 256 213 50 06*

Ayvalik
Yat Limani Karşisi (opposite the harbour), Ayvalik, *+90 266 312 21 22*

Balikesir
Valilik Binasi, Kat 5, Balikesir, *+90 266 245 13 35*

Bergama
Bergama Hükümet Konaği, B Blok Zemin Kat, Bergama, *+90 232 631 28 51*

Bodrum
Bariş Meydani No 48, Bodrum, *+90 252 316 10 91*

Burhaniye (Ören)
Meço Caddesi 25, Ören Polis Karakolu Bitişiği, Burhaniye (Ören), *+90 266 416 35 00*

Çanakkale
Kayserili Ahmet Paşa Caddesi, Çanakkale, *+90 286 217 23 71*

Çeşme
Iskele Meydani No 8, Çeşme, *+90 232 712 66 53*

Dalaman
Dalaman Airport, *+90 252 792 52 20*

Datça
Iskele Mah., Hükümet Binasi, Datça, *+90 252 712 35 46*

Denizli
Uçancibaşi Mah., 554/1 Sk No 2, Denizli, *+90 258 264 39 71*

Didim
Kaymakamlik Mah., Didim, *+90 256 811 57 07*

Fethiye
Karagözler Mah., Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi, Iskele Mey No1, Fethiye, *+90 252 614 15 27*; ***www.fethiye.net***

Foça
Atatürk Mah., Foça Girişi, No 1, Foça, *+90 232 812 12 22*

Izmir
1344 Sok No 2, Pasaport, Izmir *+90 232 483 51 17*. Adnan Menderes International Airport, *+90 232 274 22 14*; ***www.izmir tourizm.gov.tr***

Köuceğiz
Atatürk Kordonu, Köuceğiz, *+90 252 262 47 03*

Kuşadası
Liman Caddesi Bo 13, Kuşadası, *+90 256 614 11 03*; ***www.kusadası.gov.tr***

Kütahya
Menderes Işhani, Kat 1, Kütahya, *+90 274 223 62 13*

Manisa
Utku Mah., ülkü Sok., No 18, Manisa, *+90 236 231 36 85*

Marmaris
Iskele Maydani, No 2, Marmaris, *+90 252 412 10 35*; ***www.marmarisinfo.com***

Muğla
Marmaris Boulevard, No 25/1, Muğla, *+90 252 214 12 61*

Pamukkale
Örenyeri, Pamukkale, *+90 258 272 20 77*; ***www.pamukkale.gov.tr***

Selçuk
Atatürk Mah., Agora Çarşisi No 35, Selçuk, *+90 232 892 63 28*; ***www.selcuk.gov.tr***

Useful websites for tourists

www.gototurkey.co.uk

www.tourismturkey.org

www.oludenizbeach.com

Orientation

The Aegean region lies on the western and southwestern coasts of Turkey from the Burhaniye and Ayvalik areas to the Dalaman peninsula in the south, and inland to Manisa, Kütahya

and Uşak. Its largest cities are **Izmir** and **Muğla** (see p. 125), while its liveliest holiday resorts include **Bodrum**, **Marmaris**, **Kuşadası** and **Ceşme** (see p. 123, 125, and 126). The region is bordered by the Marmara region to the north, the central Anatolia region directly to the east and the Mediterranean region to the south west, with the Aegean Sea off to the west.

Getting Around

The best way to really explore the Aegean area is to hire a **car**, especially with all the equipment, such as buggies, clothes, play things and snacks that need to be packed up for a day away from your holiday accommodation. It can all fit far more easily in a car's boot than trying to carry it around on public transport. That said, if your children are older then you may be tempted to try the local bus service or trains. **Buses** generally run to a regular timetable. Contact the 'big three' bus companies, **Ulosoy**, **Koç** or **Varan**, see p. 35 for up-to-date timetables or visit the nearest tourist information office. The Aegean, like most other areas of Turkey, also has **dolmuş** taxis, the shared minibuses that run along dedicated routes, but which operate to a fairly loose timetable. If you see one you can signal for the driver to stop and, once aboard, you can ask him to let you off again anywhere along the route. Most of the towns and cities in the Aegean region have a central bus station, from which buses depart and to which they arrive regularly. In Bodrum, for instance, it is in Cevat şakir Caddesi.

You can also take a **ferryboat** ride from Bodrum to Istanbul (*+90 252 444 33 69*. ***www.denizline.net***) with or without your car. The trip takes around 22 hours, but on board there are cabins suitable for families, a restaurant and cafe, discotheque, a children's club, fitness centre and even a swimming pool. Children are welcomed on board, and your youngsters up to the age of 12 go free if sharing your cabin.

PLANNING YOUR OUTINGS

The Aegean region is so well served by the tourist information network that you are sure to find an office close to where you are staying, or in a nearby town (see p. 118). The offices generally have a helpful team of locals who will readily answer queries, and supply you with leaflets in English and local street maps. The **Turkey Tourist Map** published by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism and available in the offices is especially good if you plan to travel further afield. In terms of what to pack, always ensure you have sensible clothing for the time of year, and hats if visiting in the hotter summer months.

The sun can be fearsome. Pack walking shoes if planning to explore, and drinks, snacks and buggies if going off the beaten track. Also take plenty of bottled water.

FAST FACTS

Emergency Numbers
Emergency: *112*. There are additional numbers to call in Bodrum. Medical emergency: *155 316 80 80*. Municipal police: *153*. For local hospitals and police stations in Bodrum, Çeşme, Marmaris, Antalya and Fethiye, see p. 43

Post Offices All of the towns and cities in the region have post offices (PTT), and even some of the villages have small sub post offices. The main one in Bodrum is in Cevat Şakir Caddesi.

WHAT TO SEE & DO

Children's Top 10 Attractions

1. **Climbing** the steps that lead to the upper levels of Bodrum's outstanding and almost complete Castle of St Peter that stands on the harbourside and playing at keeping a look out for pirates. See p. 138

2. **Seeing** the windmills dotted around the countryside at Yalikavak. See p. 143

3. **Splashing** in the shallow waters off Gümüşlük and going farther out with snorkelling gear to see the partly submerged ruins of the ancient city of Myndos. See p. 131

4. **Hearing** your voice echo back from the Cavea in Bodrum's Antique Theatre as you recite a favourite poem or song. See p. 135

5. **Taking** a trip across the causeway from Kuşadası seafront to Pigeon Island and enjoying the opportunity to 'play' with a full-size fort. See p. 137

6. **Laughing** as you swim with dolphins in the Adaland Dolphinpark in Kuşadası and consider whether to view sharks from an underwater cage. See p. 132

7. **Cycling** the esplanade at Marmaris and catching sight of the yachts as they come and go from the marina. See p. 128

8. **Learning** how to dye wools and weave in the tiny village of Mazi, and adding a stitch of your own in a carpet. See p. 141

9. **Studying** the inside of a 'shipwreck' at the Museum of Underwater Archaeology in Bodrum and imagining yourself as a sailor from centuries ago. See p. 141

10. **Sailing** in the waters off Çeşme and imagining being a 16th century 'Jack Sparrow-style' pirate about to come ashore at the Castle of St Peter on the waterfront. See p. 141

Child-friendly Events & Entertainment

International Çeşme Music Festival, Çeşme ★ ALL AGES

Çeşme Kalesi, Waterfront, Çeşme. +90 232 712 66 53 (tourist information).

Held in the **Castle of St Peter** right on the waterfront at Çeşme every summer, the International Çeşme Music Festival has a long programme of events suitable for almost all members of the family. While little tots may not necessarily find something to suit them, there will certainly be a show or event for you and your older children and teenagers. There are modern popular sounds through to classical, opera and jazz featured in the programme, with musicians coming from around the world to Çeşme to perform. The best option is to visit the **tourist information office** in nearby Iskele Meydani (see p. 118) to obtain the most up-to-date information for the event if it coincides with your visit. The programme changes every year. If you do happen to miss it there's always the **Izmir International Arts Festival** and various other outdoor events to enjoy at the castle.

First week in July. Castle of St. Peter, Çeşme.

The Bodrum Cup, Bodrum ★★ ALL AGES

www.bodrumcup.com

The Bodrum Cup's International Wooden Yacht Regatta attracts families from throughout the region as well as visitors, whether they are keen sailors or not. Just watching the wonderful wooden sailing ships that come from Bodrum and further afield taking part in a programme of races with their colourful sails in view is hugely exciting. The whole event has a festival atmosphere. Restaurants serve special menus, and there are fetes, fireworks, music and dancing.

Third week in October. Events throughout Bodrum and the Marina.

The Marmaris Yacht Festival, Marmaris ★ ALL AGES

Netsel Marina, Harbourside, Marmaris. +90 252 412 10 13; www.marmarisdenizcilikfestivali.com

In early summer every year, around the beginning of May, Marmaris is transformed from a bustling tourist resort into, well, a much more bustling tourist resort. There are nautical shows and exhibitions, which your children will enjoy enormously if they are keen on sailing, along with parades, stalls, special events like hot air balloon displays, races and musical concerts. Most of the activities take place around the Netsel Marina.

Beginning May. Netsel Marina, Marmaris.

Towns & Cities

Altinkum

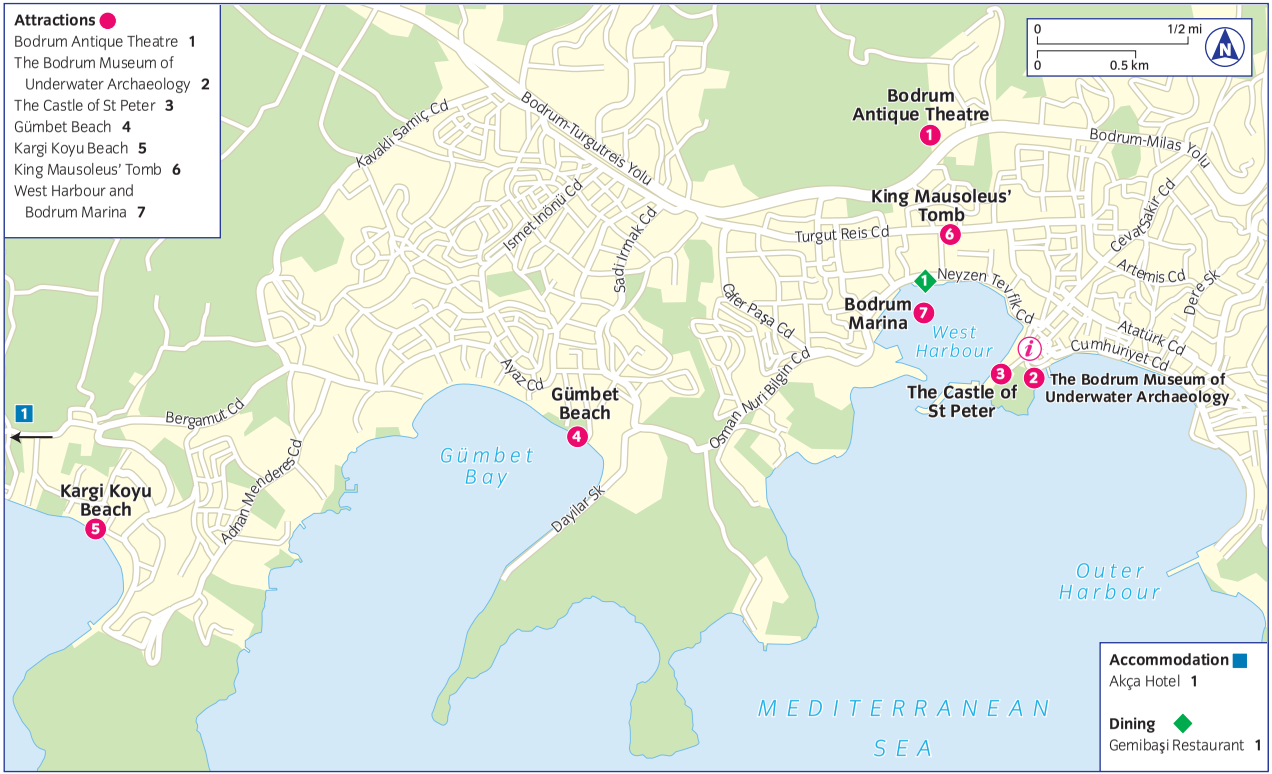
While Altinkum doesn't really have any claims to historical fame, it does have one of the longest, widest and sandiest

'golden' beaches in the Aegean region. Over the past 25 years or so it has been transformed from a sleepy little area on the coast not far from Didim and Bodrum into a favourite family holiday destination. It mainly comprises holiday resort-style complexes along the beach with accommodation and amenities all on site, although families wishing to venture further afield will find three bays to explore. You can also take boat trips along the coast from Altinkum in the summer to places such as Bodrum.

Bodrum

Characterised by its mass of white-washed low-level buildings that snake around its headlands and coves, Bodrum is hugely pretty, has lots to offer a family with children of pretty much all ages and is a lively place to stay for a holiday. It is also massively historic. Bodrum can trace its history back some 3,000 years. The **mausoleum of King Mausoleus** (see p. 137), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, is testament to this. It also has an almost complete landmark castle perched on a stretch of land for everyone in the city to see and an amphitheatre, both of which should really capture your children's imagination. There are a few good museums for you to visit, including the **Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology** (see p. 141). Two of the most popular holiday areas in **Bodrum** for families are **Gümbet** (see p. 129) and the windsurfers' haven of **Bitez** (see p. 128), while along the coast are lots of smaller resorts nestled in coves which attract clearly wealthy visitors – limos and designer sunglasses are much in evidence. Among them is **Bardakçi** (see p. 129), famed for its spring water, **Akvaryum**, which is known for it calm stretch of water between it and an off-shore island, and **Ortakent** (see p. 131) where the second longest beach to Bitez's is

Bodrum


Attractions
Bodrum Antique Theatre 1
The Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology 2
The Castle of St Peter 3
Gümbet Beach 4
Kargi Koyu Beach 5
King Mausoleus' Tomb 6
West Harbour and Bodrum Marina 7
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N
Bodrum Antique Theatre
Bodrum-Milas Yolu
Kavaklı Sarnıç Cd
Bodrum-Turgutreis Yolu
İsmet İnönü Cd
Sadi Irmak Cd
King Mausoleus' Tomb
Turgut Reis Cd
Cevat Şakir Cd
Artemis Cd
Dere Sk
Neyzen Tevfik Cd
Cafer Paşa Cd
Bodrum Marina
West Harbour
Atatürk Cd
Cumhuriyet Cd
Osman Nuri Bilgin Cd
The Castle of St Peter
The Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology
Ayaz Cd
Gümbet Beach
Bergamut Cd
Adnan Menderes Cd
Gümbet Bay
Kargi Koyu Beach
Dayılar Sk
Outer Harbour
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Accommodation
Akça Hotel 1
Dining
Gemibaşi Restaurant 1

located. Other coves include **Kargi Koyu**, **Bagla**, **Aspat**, **Karaincir**, **Akyarlar** and **Turgutreis**, plus **Kadikalesi** and the popular **Yalikavak**. Whichever area of Bodrum you choose for your family's stay, you can be sure there will be plenty of beaches to enjoy, safe waters in which to swim and a wide choice of restaurants that welcome children with menus of meals designed for smaller appetites.

Çeşme

Located in one of the most westerly positions in Turkey excluding the islands, towards the north of the Aegean region and just a few kilometres from the bustling city of Izmir, Çeşme has some top-notch beaches, safe waters, coves and islands to explore and natural thermal springs. Like many of its neighbours, Çeşme can trace its history back centuries and, as such, a few reminders of its past can still be seen. **The Castle of St Peter** that dominates the waterfront skyline is the most obvious (see p. 138). Your youngsters will love the chance to explore the castle and its grounds, some of which are open to the public. Inside, there's a little **museum** dedicated to the sea, which is well worth a visit. Çeşme has a quiet, cultural feel and is noted for its festivals. Among them are the **International Çeşme Music Festival** (see p. 122) and the **Izmir International Arts Festival** held in the castle. Next to the castle is a former caravanserai, now a hotel (see p. 144). Throughout the town are fountains. In fact, Çeşme is known for them. Why not set your children the task of exploring the town and looking out for as many fountains as they can find. There are a dozen or more of them so the task will take a while. Çeşme also has a number of mosques worth seeing, including the **Haci Memiş Ağa** mosque and the **Haci Mehmet Ağa** mosque, both built to an unusual design, along with elegant houses showing a mix of Turkish and Greek architecture.

Dalyan & Dalaman

Located not far from Dalaman and its airport, Dalyan is one of the Aegean region's top tourist spots. It is famous for its much-photographed **rock tombs** and its **thermal mud baths** where hours of fun can be had. It is also home to the government-protected **Iztuzu Beach**, a nesting ground for the endangered caretta caretta turtle. While hotels, beach clubs and tourist attractions have sprung up around Dalyan, development close to Iztuzu Beach is strictly controlled to safeguard the environment for the turtles (see p. 130).

Izmir

Located on the bay of the same name and close to the resorts of Çeşme, Sulçuk and Kuşadası,

Izmir is a cosmopolitan city with large hotels, shops, leisure amenities, mosques and museums. Its **Archaeology Museum** (see p. 139) near Konak Square is arguably its best museum, with displays of antiquities that date back centuries, but there are also good museums dedicated to ethnography, fine arts and natural history. Its **Atatürk Museum**, housed in a lovely old property in Atatürk Caddesi, displays old photographs if your family is into recent Turkish history. Izmir is the third largest city in Turkey, after Ankara and Istanbul, and as such it has a thriving commercial centre. It is not really a tourist city however, and your family's visit will probably revolve around experiencing daily life. It has some of the most authentic bazaars in this area of Turkey, where everything from traditional crafts to gems can be found.

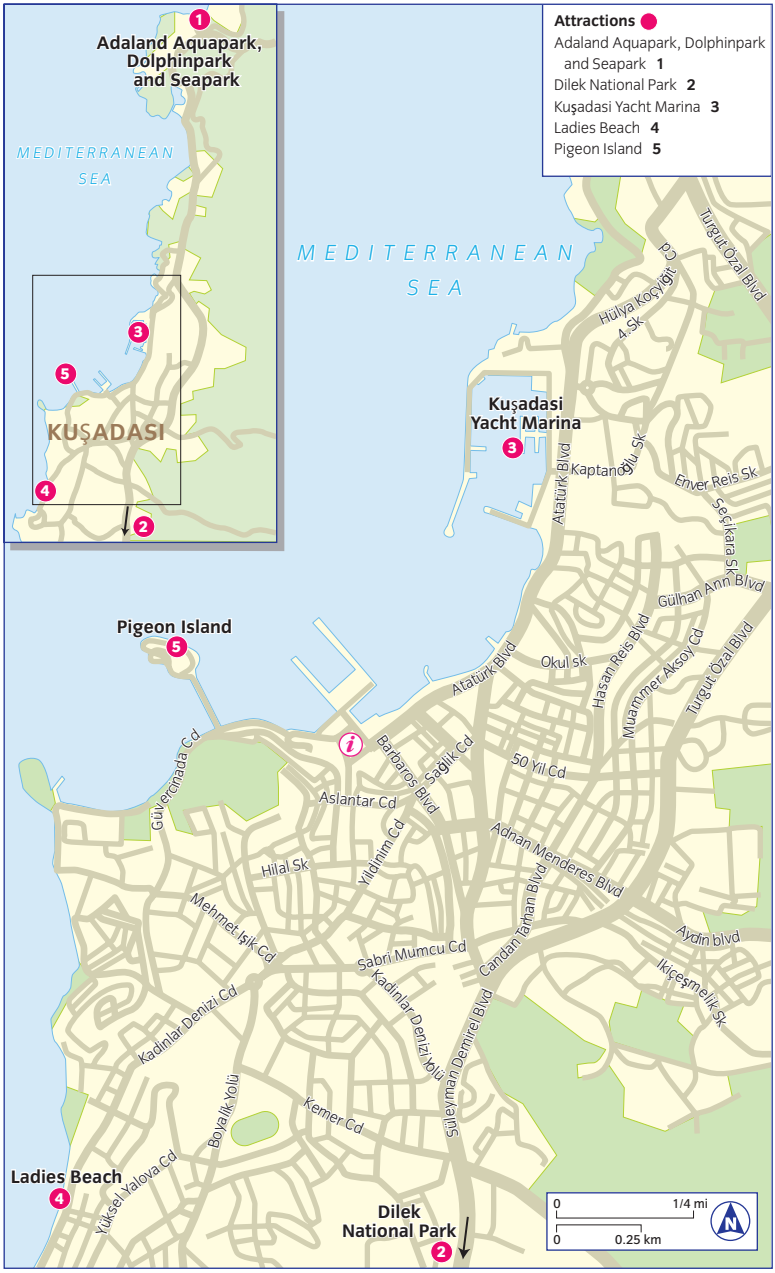
Kuşadası

Kuşadası revolves around its large port and marina, and is generally full to the brim with tourists in the summer months. Whether they are there to enjoy the view of big ships and cruise ships passing by, or are keener to relax on the beach, dine at a quayside restaurant or enjoy a cultural event is open to question. Kuşadası is a cosmopolitan city. There are beaches galore, attractions, restaurants and a particularly wide choice of hotels for your stay. Its waters are safe for swimming, and are especially popular with diving enthusiasts. The city takes its name, meaning 'bird island', from a pretty, compact island that lies just off its seafront. Known as Pigeon Island, or sometimes Pirate Castle Island as it was at one time a base used by pirates, it is reached from the mainland by a causeway and has its own **Byzantine castle** (see p. 137). At night the restored castle, built during Ottoman times as a means of defence, is lit and provides a beautiful view from the mainland. Your children will love the opportunity to walk over the causeway and explore the castle, which looks rather like a toy fort found in the playrooms of every young boy, albeit a bit bigger. This is the spot for some of the best sunsets ever to be seen in the Aegean, plus some of the liveliest nightlife. Nearby, is the outstanding **Dilek Peninsula National Park** (see p. 133) and **Ephesus** (see p. 136) where the remarkably well-preserved remains of one of the most famous ancient cities ever can be visited. It is the site of the **Temple of Artemis**, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Marmaris

Marmaris hugs the coast a little north of Dalaman, on the southwestern tip of the Aegean region. Centuries ago it was an important Dorian city and a fishing village in more recent times, but

KUŞADASI


Attractions
Adaland Aquapark, Dolphinpark and Seapark 1
Dilek National Park 2
Kuşadasi Yacht Marina 3
Ladies Beach 4
Pigeon Island 5
Adaland Aquapark, Dolphinpark and Seapark
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
KUŞADASI
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Kuşadasi Yacht Marina
Pigeon Island
Ladies Beach
Dilek National Park
Turgut Özal Blvd
Hülya Koçyiğit Cd
Hülya Koçyiğit 4. Sk
Atatürk Blvd
Kaptanoğlu Sk
Enver Reis Sk
Gülhan Anın Blvd
Hasan Reis Blvd
Muammer Aksoy Cd
Okul sk
Güvercinada Cd
Barbaros Blvd
Sağlık Cd
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Aslantar Cd
Yıldırım Cd
Adnan Menderes Blvd
Hilal Sk
Mehmet Işık Cd
Sabri Mumcu Cd
Candan Tarhan Blvd
Aydın blvd
İkiçeşmelik Sk
Kadınlar Denizi Cd
Kadınlar Denizi Yolu
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0 1/4 mi
0 0.25 km

little remains of its history because of an earthquake 60 or so years ago that destroyed most of its buildings. It was rebuilt, and what emerged was a holiday hotspot. It lies in a sheltered bay surrounded by pine forest and olive groves, which makes it attractive for holidays. Along with its neighbouring resort, İçmeler, Marmaris offers everything you would expect from a tourist destination. There's a **marina**, long stretches of beach, a couple of **aquaparks**, nightclubs and shops, and what seems like an endless number of hotels, tourist complexes and restaurants. If your family likes a lively place to stay or visit during their holiday then Marmaris is it. Among the activities are **jeep safaris** and **boat trips**, **cycling routes** along the esplanade and the chance to explore the rebuilt **Marmaris castle** and its **museum**. Its bazaar offers all manner of goodies, including the famous and delicious Marmaris honey made in the countryside that surrounds the town. Just along the bay are **Turunç** and **Datça**, which are quieter.

Best Beaches

Some of the best beaches in Turkey can be found in the Aegean area, and many of these have been classified as Blue Flag beaches for their standard of cleanliness, water quality, facilities, safety and management. These include:

In **Çeşme**, the beaches at the Ayasaranda Kerasus Hotel, the Babaylon Hotel, the Boyalık Ilıca Sheraton and Ontur Beach, along with the Altın Yunus Apart Beach Club, Karaburun Akvaryum, Karaburun Kuyucak Beach, Paparazzi Beach, Alaçatı Seaside Beach Club and Tekke Beach.

In **Kuşadası**, the beaches at the Adakule Hotel, the Prelude Hotel, Green Beach, Onura Beach, Papaz Hamamı Beach, Tusan Beach, Çamlimanı-Pine Bay Hotel's beach, Kadınlar Denizi, Ömer Holiday Village's beach, Kuştur Club Holiday Village, Blue Sky beach, and the beaches at the Ephesia Hotel and the Imbat Hotel have been awarded Blue Flags.

Selçuk's Artemisa Ephesus Princess beach is also a Blue Flag beach. **Bodrum**, similarly, has 20 or more Blue Flag beaches, among them the Club Milta Beach, the Samara Beach, Sea Garden Beach and the Club Med Bodrum Beach.

Other notable beaches for family fun include:

Aktur Beach and Halikarya Beach, Bitez, Bodrum ★★
Both of these beaches are, again, Blue Flag beaches and, as such, are ideal for children to play safely in the sand. The shallow waters are safe for swimming, only deepening as you go some way out. The beaches are known to attract waterskiers and windsurfers. Beachside restaurants and cafés provide refreshments.

Akyarlar Beach, Akyarlar
A compact and sandy beach with hills behind that, because of their shape and location, seem to heighten the strength of the wind, this beach is especially popular with windsurfing enthusiasts. The beach itself is largely protected from gusts, but the sea here can get choppy.

Bağla Beach, Bağla
Located around 14km from Bodrum, Bağla Beach at Bağla is popular with locals who know that this is one of the best beaches in the area. It has lots of little coves just waiting to be explored. Your family will be able to spend hours here relaxing, swimming and checking out the coves.

Bardakçi Beach, Bardakçi ★
In ancient times this beach, which is usually discovered on a boat trip from Bodrum, was known as Salmakis. It was given its name by none other than the male fairy Hermafrodit. It may sound a bit far-fetched, and probably is, but the legend should capture your little ones' imagination a treat. Hermafrodit, it seems, liked the beach so it must be good! The beach is also famed for its natural spring water.

Gümbet Beach, Bodrum ★★
A long stretch of beach located close to the town centre, Gümbet Beach in the Gümbet area of Bodrum is popular with families. Soft sand, safe waters and what appears to be a never-ending number of restaurants and cafes, each offering local and international dishes plus special menus for children, ensure it is always busy.

Gümbet

Gündoğan Beach, Gündoğan
Characterised by the fishing boats that come and go, and the fresh fish sold on the quayside, Gündoğan Beach in Gündoğan is a great place to stay for an hour or two, enjoy its soft sand, clean waters for a swim and take a lunch in one of its tiny restaurants. Your children will love the opportunity to explore the village's little streets just off the beach and find local crafts being made too.

Içmeler Beach, Marmaris ★
Long, wide and sandy, the Içmeler Beach is one of the most popular among the beaches that stretch along the waterfront of Marmaris and its neighbouring resorts of Içmeler, Turunç and Datça. Behind it are pine forests, while along its length are restaurants and cafes, making a family

day on the beach fun and convenient.

Ildiri Beach, Çeşme
If you and your family prefer to get away from the hustle and bustle of touristy beaches and want to relax on one that is quiet and natural then head for Ildiri, around 20km along the coast from Çeşme. Ildiri Beach is where the ancient city of Erythria is located, and if you are lucky you may stumble across an old remain. It is reached along an unmade road signposted from Sifne.

Ilica Beach, Çeşme ★
The largest stretch of beach in Çeşme and by far its most heavily populated area as far as tourists go, Ilica Beach has soft, white sand and is ideal for making sandcastles all day long. It's clean and its shallow waters are safe for swimming, with super-vision of course. Alongside Ilica Beach are dozens of good hotels and restaurants, with most eateries offering special menus for children.

Iztuzu Beach, Dalyan ★
A government-protected beach, Iztuzu Beach in Dalyan is a nesting ground for the endangered caretta caretta turtle. While large hotels and residences have sprung up in other areas around Dalyan, development close to Iztuzu Beach is strictly controlled. Nearby are Dalyan's rock tombs and its famous mud baths.

Kadikale Resort, Turgutreis
The town of Turgutreis is home to not only one of the most popular resorts in the area, Kadikale Resort, but also the Sporat Group of islands that lie just off its quayside. Relaxing on the sandy beach of the resort or in a quayside cafe, the view out to sea is fascinating. There are 14 islands to look at and wonder what's there. Your children will undoubtedly beg for a boat trip to visit some of them.

Karaincir Beach, Karaincir
Surrounded by hills and protected from the often chilly north wind, Karaincir Beach is popular with visitors and residents alike. Its good 'sun trap' location has meant that hotels and restaurants have gradually been developed here, so there are always plenty of places to get a midday snack if spending the day on the beach. The sand is fine and the water safe.

Kargi Koyu Beach, Kargi Koyu Cove ★
Located north of Bağlar Point just along the peninsula from Bodrum, the Kargi Koyu Beach has very fine sand. It lies in a cove frequented by tour boats, with their occupants spilling out for a swim ashore. Your children will love the fact that the beach offers the unusual amenity of a camel reserve.

Ladies' Beach, Kuşadası
This beach, the most popular in Kuşadası, takes it name from when men and women would bathe at different beaches in more modest times. Today, it is often populated with sunbathers. It is long and sandy, and fringed by palm trees. Restaurants, bars and hotels line its route.

Ortakent Beach, Ortakent, Bodrum ★★

The second longest beach in Bodrum after Bitez's, Ortakent Beach is another that has been awarded a Blue Flag. This beach is especially popular with families or couples looking for a quieter place to relax. It has a green plain full of lemon and orange trees that go on for some 12km behind it, and a selection of upmarket hotels.

Pamuçak Beach, Kuşadası ★

A long, wide beach, the Pamuçak Beach in Kuşadası can usually be found adorned with sunbeds and umbrellas. When your children have tired of making sandcastles you could take them to the Pamuçak Beach's **Aquafantasy Waterpark**. Although not as big as the other park in Kuşadası, it does offer some watery fun.

Paşa, Ağaçbaşi and Tilkicik Beaches, Yalikavak

Three large, sandy beaches that nestle in coves, the Paşa, Ağaçbaşi and Tilkicik Beaches in Yalikavak, 18km or so from Bodrum, are always popular and lively. There are a few restaurants dotted along the waterside, some even putting tables out on the beach. The area is known for its windmills, the symbol of Bodrum.

Natural Wonders & Spectacular Views

Gümüşlük ★★

The little village of Gümüşlük, just a few kilometres from Bodrum, perches high on a headland overlooking the sea. It is small, quiet and tranquil. In fact, it stands on the site of the ancient city of Myndos – if you take a boat out or you or your children are keen divers or snorkelers you can see the ruins of the city that rest partly submerged just off the coast. There's an ancient theatre, lots of walls and even a plateau covered in mosaics to see. It is spectacular. From Gümüşlük, you can also take a stroll through an extremely shallow area of sea (it is only a few inches deep) to a little island populated by rabbits. They give it its name, Rabbit Island. The whole area is a protected historic site and is really rather special. There are a few small restaurants that serve fish freshly caught by the local fishermen, and a little church that dates from Roman times that is today used as an art gallery.

Karaada Island, Karaada ★

FIND

This quite small island lies just a few kilometres off the coast of Bodrum. It has small beaches, coves, caves and pine tree forests to explore, but being compact you and your children don't have to go too far for an adventure. The island's mud is known for its beauty-giving properties, but whether you want to cover your face in the brown sludge while on holiday, and in full view of your children, is another matter. Thermal spring waters nearby do give the opportunity for a wash afterwards though, and, of

course, there's always the sea to go for a swim.

Pamukkale ★★★

Pamukkale lies in the border area with the Aegean's neighbouring region, the Mediterranean, along the Izmir to Antalya road. It is a landmark tourist attraction, and is often visited on a day trip combined with nearby **Hierapolis** (see p. 137). A series of Travertine Cascades, or steps, created over centuries as hot springs fell leaving deposits of limestone, it takes on a magical look as crystal clear water rests in little shallow 'bowls'. Nearby are the **Pamukkale Thermal Baths** where you and your children can relax in the waters and lean against ancient columns. The Pamukkale museum tells its story. The ruins of the ancient city of Hierapolis lie behind the cascades, widely regarded as a spectacle of nature.

Nature Reserves, Parks & Gardens

Adaland Aquapark, Dolphinpark and Seapark, Kuşadası ★★ VALUE

Adaland Aquapark, Dolphinpark and Seapark, Çamlimanı Mevkii, Kuşadası. *+90 256 618 12 52;* ***www.adaland.com***

One of the largest aquaparks in Turkey, Adaland in Kuşadası is around 25 acres in size and offers all the facilities you would expect of a park of this size. There are various swimming pools, wave pools, flumes, slides and river rides, plus, for the really adventurous in your family, a water disco. The park is geared very much to families, as you would expect, and therefore there's every amenity for changing babies and refreshing toddlers, as well as restaurants that will provide you with a good choice of your

Travertine Cascades, Pamukkale

children's favourites on the menu. Right next door and part of the Adaland complex is **Dolphinpark**, where its dolphins and seacats provide hours of entertainment for your children, and **Seapark** where all manner of marine life can be viewed in huge aquariums. You can actually don snorkels and goggles and swim and touch some of the exhibits, such as dolphins and rays. If you or your older children are brave, you can even go in the water in a cage and see sharks close up. Seapark really does provide an interactive experience.

***Open** 10am–6pm spring and autumn, 10am–7pm in summer. **Admission** for Aquapark 40 YTL, children aged 4–9 25 YTL, under 4s free. Dolphinpark 30 YTL, children 4–9 20 YTL, under 4s free. Swimming with dolphins is an extra 155 YTL. Seapark 75 YTL, children aged 4–9 50 YTL, under 4s free.*

Aquapark Dedeman Bodrum, Bodrum ★★

*Aquapark Dedeman Bodrum, Turgutreis yolou, Yalikavak kavşağı, Ortakent, Bodrum. +90 252 358 59 00; **www.depark.com.tr***

Children always seem to crave a visit to an aquapark during their holidays, so with such a good one offered in Bodrum it's an easy request to fulfil. The Aquapark Dedeman Bodrum has been created within the countryside and hills close to the centre of town. There are water slides, wave pools, swimming pools with various depths suitable for non to experienced swimmers and a river, plus activities such as trampolines and lots of restaurants. Of course, all offer children's menus.

***Open** 10am–6pm daily. **Admission** 40 YTL adults, 25 YTL children, under 4s free.*

Atlantis Waterpark, Marmaris ★

*Atlantis Waterpark, Siteler Mah. 212 Sok. No: 3 Uzunyalı, Marmaris. +90 252 411 04 61; **www.marmarisinfo.com***

The sprawling Atlantis Waterpark will not hold any surprises for you, but it will make a wonderful day out for your children, whatever their ages. As you would expect, there are swimming pools, water chutes, slides, a wave pool and bumper boats designed for maximum fun. A good selection of restaurants and cafés have menus designed with children very much in mind too, and there's a bowling alley and an amusement arcade for when splashing in the water becomes all too much. Older children or teenagers can head off to an Internet café if the pools don't appeal. The park, which lies alongside the Atlantis Beach where sunbeds and umbrellas are provided, is easy to reach from anywhere in Marmaris and is well signposted.

***Open** 10am–6pm daily, until 7pm in summer. **Admission** 40 YTL adults, 25 YTL children, under 4s free.*

Dilek National Park, Kuşadası ★ FIND

Dilek National Park, Kuşadası. +90 256 646 10 79.

One of the largest natural parks in Turkey, the Dilek National Park is a mix of countryside, forest and outstanding coastline. It is

home to wild horses, flowers and trees. If you and your family are keen walkers or wildlife enthusiasts then a visit to the park will be a memorable experience. It doesn't offer too many amenities other than picnic areas, although they do have barbecues for you to cook food on. It is advisable to pack plenty of drinks and changes of clothes for your little ones, swimming gear and your camera. Among the beaches in the park are İçmeler Beach, Kavaklı Beach and Karapınar Beach, all of which are sandy and quiet. The park is signposted from Kuşadası, and dolmuş minibuses leave the town's bus station for the park regularly.

***Open** 10am–5pm daily. **Admission** 10 YTL.*

Farilya Horse Farm (Farilya Atli Spor) ★ FIND

Farilya Atli Spor, or Farilya Horse Farm, Yukari Gol Mevkii, Gundogan, Bodrum. +90 252 357 79 77

Located in Gundogan, a rural village that lies in the hilly countryside above Bodrum, the Farilya Atli Spor, or Farilya Horse Farm, provides children with the chance to mix with a few animals. There are lambs, goats and sheep, plus stables full of horses. You can book riding lessons, or, if you are an experienced rider, can take horses on a hack. Smaller horses and ponies are provided for children.

***Open** 10am–5pm daily. **Admission** free.*

Kültürpark, Izmir ★

Kültürpark, Izmir. +90 232 483 51 17.

The largest park in Izmir, the Kültürpark, is where local residents come to relax and take a break from the frenetic atmosphere and heat of the city. It has a large children's playground and an amusement park, which makes it popular with families. There's a zoo, too, which has a good collection of animals, reptiles and birds, and is worth a trip with your children. Within the park there are several restaurants and cafés with special menus for children as well as facilities for changing babies.

***Open** 10am–6pm daily. **Admission** free.*

Peninsula Village, Çeşme

Peninsula Village, Çeşme. +90 232 712 66 53.

A brand new resort-style development on the coast at Çeşme, Peninsula Village offers everything from a private white sandy beach to an endless array of children's sports and leisure amenities. There's a Children's Club designed for children of 4 years through to 12, an adventure playground with climbing frames and swings, a supervised children's crèche and a discotheque for teenagers. Swimming and wave pools, river rides, spa pools and sports such as golf, tennis, volleyball, sailing and other watersports are provided too, plus restaurants to suit all tastes and appetite sizes, and a health suite. Private and holiday accommodation is available on site.

Open *9am–late daily, depending on the season.* ***Admission*** *free with costs for attractions.*

Scala Beach, Ortakent, Bodrum ★★ FIND

Scala Beach, Ortakent Yalisi, Bodrum. *+90 252 358 58 88,* ***www.scalabeach.net***

A perfect place for a family to spend a few hours, or days, the Scala Beach complex offers swimming and sunbathing, lots of sports such as basketball, volleyball and tennis, more unusual activities that include a climbing wall plus snack bars, restaurants and a buffet with goodies to suit all the family's tastes. There's a programme of special events, while in the evening there's music, dancing and entertainment. Scala Beach promises fun – and it definitely delivers.

Historic Buildings & Monuments

Bodrum Antique Theatre ★

Bodrum Antique Theatre, Kibris Sehitler Caddesi, Bodrum. *+90 252 316 10 91 (tourist information).*

The large amphitheatre stands a short walk inland from the quayside up Göktepe Hill. It can be seen from the ring road that circles the town. Your children will love to visit for the chance to stand in the centre of the 'stage', recite their favourite poem or sing a ditty and hear their voices echo back to them from the Cavea, otherwise known as the seating area. Thousands of people would have once sat on the stone seats to see events. The amphitheatre, or Bodrum's Antique Theatre as it is known, is believed to date from around 330 to 30 years BC, the Hellenistic Age's reign of Carian.

Open *10am–6pm daily except Monday, with reduced hours in winter months.* ***Admission*** *free.*

Çeşme Kalesi, Çeşme ★

Çeşme Kalesi, Waterfront, Çeşme. *+90 232 712 66 53*

A remarkably intact, 16th-century Genoese-style castle, the Çeşme Kalesi, otherwise known as the Castle of St Peter, stands prominently on the waterfront of the town. It was built by the Sultan Beyazit II, a powerful 16th-century ruler of the town, to provide defence against pirates and naval warriors. Çeşme was the first port of call from the Mediterranean, and often came under attack from invaders. Rectangular in shape and affording six towers and a courtyard, it just begs to be explored. Your children will love it. Inside, there's an interesting **nautical museum**, with exhibits of ships, anchors and other artefacts recovered from shipwrecks in the area. Every year the castle hosts several festivals, including the **International Çeşme Music Festival** and the **Izmir International Arts Festival** (see p. 122).The nearby tourist information office in Iskele Meydani No 8 has information on the long programme of events for both festivals.

Open *8.30am–5pm daily except Monday, with reduced hours in winter. Often closed for a lunch break.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Ephesus ★★★

Even if your children are not keen on visiting historical sites while on holiday, you really must include the remarkably well-preserved remains of Ephesus, one of the most famous ancient cities ever and one of the finest examples in the world today, on your agenda. This extraordinary collection of temples, columns, dwellings, gates and a marketplace really can't be ignored, and you may even find your most uninterested youngster suddenly becomes captivated by the colonnaded street, which looks as though it belongs on a film set, or the massive amphitheatre carved into the rock. Ephesus is the site of the **Temple of Artemis**, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Today, there are various buildings to see, including the **Library of Celsus** built around AD 115. That and the **amphitheatre** are awesome.

Ephesus, which can trace its history back to around the 11th century BC, is located not far from Kuşadası and Selçuk. Allow yourself several hours to see every nook and cranny, and really appreciate its magnificence. There's a **museum** that tells its story (see p. 139).

Foça ★★

Foça is neither a historical building nor a monument, but a small fishing village that, despite attracting Turkish city folk on day trips or short breaks, has lost none of its rustic charm. The old town, especially, is worth exploring. Your children will love it. There are tiny whitewashed houses dotted around a maze of alleyways. Foça has a small amphitheatre on the outskirts of the village and a Byzantine and Genoese castle on its seafront, but it is the atmosphere of dining in an authentic Turkish restaurant overlooking its quayside that is memorable.

Library of Celsus, Ephesus

INSIDER TIP

Take a boat trip from Foça's quayside to see the seals that bob about in the waters and laze on the rocks of the bay. They are protected monk seals.

Hierapolis ★

Hierapolis, which lies inland to the east of the Aegean region, is one of the most popular historic sites visited by tourists. It is often combined with a trip to the nearby Pamukkale Travertine Cascades and the thermal springs (see p. 132). An ancient city, Hierapolis was an early version of a spa town. It dates from well before Christ, although it suffered an earthquake and was rebuilt. Its history has been chequered, including at one stage being partly submerged by water. The ruins of a theatre, dwellings and a graveyard are, nonetheless, well preserved. Some of its ruins can be seen in the waters used as thermal baths. Your children can swim and bathe amid the ruins of columns and walls – an experience without parallel.

King Mausoleus's Tomb, the Mausoleum, Bodrum

King Mausoleus's Tomb, the Mausoleum, Turgut Reis Caddesi, Bodrum. +90 252 316 10 91 (tourist information).

One of the **Seven Wonders of the Ancient World**, the Mausoleum was built as the tomb of King Mausoleus, the ruler of the Caria, around the year 355 BC. Archaeology excavations have suggested that it was once a massive structure with a square podium the height of an office block, with a colonnade of columns, an inner chamber and then a high pitched roof topped with a horse-drawn chariot statue, all in white stone. It must have been quite a sight. Nowadays, it's not so impressive as many of its stones were used in the construction of Bodrum's castle, however, it remains an important part of ancient history, which, if your children are keen on knowing more about Turkey, should interest them enormously. A little **museum** tells its story.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily, closed Monday. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Pergamum ★

This ancient city was the capital of the area until the honour was bestowed on Ephesus. It is said the city had the most beautiful and ornate buildings at the time. Today, there isn't too much to see other than its outstanding **acropolis theatre** and an ancient **bath complex**, but it does have an interesting **museum** that tells its story. Nearby is the town of **Bergama**, famed for its lovely architecture and carpets.

Pigeon Island, Kuşadasi ★★

FIND

Resembling a toy fort in the centre of an island, the 16th-century Byzantine castle that sits proudly on Pigeon Island off the seafront at Kuşadasi will really excite your children, especially your boys. It begs to be explored. Pigeon Island, so called because it has long been populated by large

numbers of birds, is also sometimes known as Pirate Castle Island because it was a one-time base for pirates. Clearly they felt safe to go about their business with only a causeway between them and the mainland. The island and its castle were considered an important early warning system for advancing ships and a means of defence during Ottoman times. Today, a visit to the island is a must. Your children will love the chance to play pirates or soldiers, while you will be rewarded by a panoramic view of Kuşadasi waterfront. Try to be there as the sun goes down – the island is known as one of the best places to see a sunset in the Aegean region, if not the world. You can get there by walking across the causeway from Kuşadasi quayside.

Selçuk ★

The Aegean region has so many historic sites to see that the really rather impressive Selçuk Castle with its well-preserved citadel walls, towers and courtyards is often overlooked. Standing quietly on the top of Ayasuluk Hill, near the town of Selçuk, the castle is said to have been the home of St John the Evangelist, who lived during the time of Christ and died some 50 years after his death. Today, a nearby **cathedral** is an important Christian building. Also close by is the **House of Virgin Mary**, a small stone building dating from around the 4th century, although its foundations appear to date from the 1st century, where it is believed the Virgin Mary died. Pope Benedict XVI celebrated mass here in 2006.

The Castle of St Peter, Bodrum ★★ VALUE

The Castle of St Peter, Harbourside, Bodrum. +90 252 316 10 91 (tourist information).

Dating from the 15th century and built by the crusading Knights of St John, Bodrum's almost-complete castle stands on a headland overlooking the bay for everyone to see – it dominates the skyline. Creamish white in colour, it begs to be visited. Your children will not rest until they have explored every inch,

Selçuk Castle

including the towers. For them it will be great fun reaching the top and for you the climb will be rewarded with a panoramic view of the town. While your boys will love the chance to play ancient knights, they will also have the chance to visit the **archaeology museum** housed in the castle and see shipwrecks. Your girls, however, will probably prefer to visit the **Carian Princess Ada Hall**, where personal items that once belonged to the Carian princess, Princess Ada, who died around 330 BC, can be seen. She clearly liked jewellery as there are some rather spectacular items that were discovered when her tomb was unearthed a few years back. You could easily spend a few hours in the castle, and fortunately there are baby-changing facilities if you have very young children and a café for refreshing drinks.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily, closed Monday. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children. **Amenities** baby-changing facilities, cafe.*

The Top Museums

Archaeology Museum, Izmir

Archaeology Museum, Izmir. +90 232 483 51 17.

The Archaeology Museum near Konak Square in Izmir is well worth visiting if you are spending some time in this sprawling, busy city not far from Kuşadası and Çeşme. It offers several halls of artefacts dating back centuries that have been found in the area, along with a couple of notable exhibits, the statues of Poseidon and Demeter, which were unearthed in the agora, or marketplace, built around the time of Alexander the Great.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily except Monday. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Çeşme Museum, Çeşme ★★

VALUE

Çeşme Castle, Harbourside, Çeşme. +90 232 712 66 09. www.gototurkey.com.

Located on the waterfront and within the landmark Çeşme Castle, Çeşme Museum is worth taking your children to because its exhibits are interesting, some are interactive and all are educational. There are well over 300 archaeological items, nearly 150 ethnographic objects and numerous coins collected from Çeşme town and its surrounding villages and countryside. Children can touch and feel some of the exhibits, including a cannon that was once used to defend the town from marauding warriors and pirates.

***Open** 8.30am–5pm daily, with reduced hours in winter. Closed Monday. Often closed for a lunch break. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Ephesus Museum, Ephesus ★★

Ephesus Museum, Ephesus. +90 232 892 63 28.

Step inside the Ephesus Museum and you will be taken aback. Its collection of astonishingly old and well-preserved artefacts, statues and frescos that might have at one

View of the bay from Marmaris Castle

time decorated this ancient city is one of the best on display in the whole of Turkey. The exhibits are largely from the Ephesus site itself, especially from the Temple of Artemis (see p. 136), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. They were unearthed during excavations and really shouldn't be missed.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Kuşadası Train Museum, Kuşadası ★★

Kuşadası Train Museum, Camlik, Kuşadası. +90 256 614 11 03.

This museum will provide you and your children with a few interesting hours if you all like trains. Located in the village of Camlik, just 14km or so from Kuşadası, it has more than 30 locomotives, some passenger trains, others freight, that date back decades. It is the largest locomotive museum in Turkey. Sadly, you can't ride on the trains as they are all static, but you can look at them and climb aboard. There's a picnic area and toilets for refreshment.

***Open** 10am–5pm most days. Check before visiting. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children. **Amenities** picnic area, toilets.*

Marmaris Castle and Museum, Marmaris

Marmaris Castle and Museum, Marmaris. +90 252 412 14 99.

While Marmaris Castle can trace its history back to the 16th century, when it was built by Süleyman the Magnificent, a leading figure in Turkish history, little remains of the original structure today because of an earthquake and damage during World War I. The rebuilt castle captures the look of the original though, and is worth a visit. Your children will love exploring its halls and courtyard. Inside, there's a little **nautical museum** with exhibits found in the Marmaris area.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily with reduced hours in winter. Closed Monday.*

***Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

The Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, Bodrum ★★

*The Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, Castle of St Peter on the harbourside, Bodrum. +90 252 316 26 16. **www.bodrum-museum.com***

Housed in Bodrum's Castle of St Peter, the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology is a fascinating place to spend a few hours. Even your youngest tots should find the exhibits of interest, especially the **shipwreck**, which you can actually walk around. Well, actually it's a model of a wreck, but fun for the children nonetheless. The exhibit tells the story of the *Yassiada*, a ship that perished around the 7th century AD. On board were kitchen utensils and amphorae jars full of wine, clothing, food and various items of equipment, and many of these were recovered during much more recent excavations. The museum also has an **Exhibition Hall of Bronze Age Wrecks** housed in the eastern areas of the castle, and again fascinating, centuries-old artefacts are on display, including swords, which your boys especially will love. There are reconstructions of some of the wrecks found in nearby waters.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily, closed Monday. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Arts & Crafts

Mazi Weaving ★

The tiny village of Mazi, just a few kilometres inland from Bodrum, is known for its excellent handmade carpets and rugs. A delightful village that has remained almost unchanged for centuries, its weaves are renowned throughout Turkey. You can see carpets and rugs being made, which your children should find fascinating. They may even be encouraged to add a stitch of their own. The colours used tend to be yellow and cream with hints of brown. The wool is dyed using herbs and roots, which are boiled in large cauldrons, and if you are lucky you can see this being done too. If you can, buy a small rug to take home or have a carpet sent back. They make a lovely souvenir.

Child-friendly Tours

Sailing and Cruises ★

The coastal towns of the Aegean region have, what seems, an endless number of companies specialising in cruises of a day or a few hours' duration, and for boat hire. Most are situated along the esplanade areas or in the marinas or ports that are dotted along the coast.

In Çeşme, for instance, you can cruise to Sakiz Island, among others, from the **Çeşme-Altinyunus Yacht Port** (*+90 232 712 60 05*) or sail up the coast to one of the many little bays, including **Ayayorgi** where the waters are crystal clear and you

can see lots of brightly coloured fish.

For Active Families

Diving in the Aegean ★

If your family fancies the idea of diving, or you are already keen divers, then you will be spoilt for choice in the southwest area of the Aegean region. There are PADI-registered dive schools in most resorts, and some outstanding dive sites of various depths. Among them are the Big Bango and the Small Bango just a short distance from Bodrum and Kargi Island just off Akyarlar Point. Others include Karaada-Aksona Point, Orak Island and Point, Köçek Island, Karaada-Deliki Cave, Karaada-Kaçakçi Cove and Yassikaya Island. All are recognised dive sites where the shallows and depths reveal all manner of fish and amphorae. Turtles and barracudas can often be seen too.

Windsurfing

The coastal seas of the Aegean are ideal for windsurfing and many clubs offer facilities in all the tourist towns of the region. Your older children and teenagers will probably want to give it a try. The list of companies is endless but local tourist information offices have leaflets so a good idea might be to pop into the nearest one to your holiday accommodation to find out what is on offer. One company in **Alacati**, a surfer's hotspot near Çeşme, is the **Arkin & Ralk's Alacati Surf Paradise Club** (*+90 232 716 66 11*. ***www.alacati.de***), which has been offering windsurfing and kitesurfing lessons and facilities for many years. Another is **Kite Surf Beach** at Pirlanta Beach in Çiftlikköy, Çeşme (*+90 536 458 84 94*. ***www.kitesurfbeach.com***).

Shopping

With so many holiday resorts and major cities in the region, shopping centres are very much in evidence. Whether you and your family want to buy everyday items to see you through your stay, you fancy adding to your wardrobe or you hope to find some souvenirs to take home, you should find plenty of choice.

In **Bodrum**, for example, one of the largest shopping complexes is the **Oasis Shopping Centre** (Emin Anter Bulvarı, Kıbrıs Şehitleri Cad. *+90 252 317 00 02*;. ***www.oasisbodrum.com***). In fact, it's so big that you'll find around 10,000 square metres of parkland complete with fountains, ancient olive trees and palm trees, along with a cinema, cultural event venue, play areas and what appears to be an endless number of bars and restaurants. The latter offering everything from à la carte to children's favourites. Of course, that's before you've even discovered shops where children's and adult's fashions, food, toys, electrical, stationery and household goods are just some of the items available to buy. The Oasis Shopping Centre isn't just full of locals and visitors, but also residents of the Aegean region who have travelled for miles.

Of course, you may want to find a souvenir to take home that is more traditional; something that cannot be found in a modern shopping centre. For this try heading off to **Mazi** (see p. 141), a tiny village near Bodrum that has remained unchanged for centuries and is known for its excellent handmade carpets and rugs. Also try **Bergama**, famed for its carpets characterised by their deep red colour. The markets and bazaars found throughout the region are a good source of unusual purchases. You could be lucky and find traditional water pipes or copperware authentic to the area. There are also shops selling local jewellery. **Çeşme**, for instance, is known for its gold and there are several outlets where you can find a bargain (see ***www.cesmegold.com***).

Yalikavak, similarly, which is just along the coast from Bodrum, is known for its windmills, and its shops stock lots of souvenir versions for you to take home, while the city of **Izmir** has numerous bazaars selling authentic Turkish goods.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

Prices quoted are for a double room in low season.

INEXPENSIVE

Akça Hotel ★★ VALUE

*Ortakent Yahşi Yalısı, Bodrum. +90 252 348 31 52; **www.akcahotel.8k.com**. Located just 10km or so from the Bodrum Museum, next to the beach at Bitez, Bodrum.*

Like almost every other property in Bodrum, the Akça Hotel is a white-washed, low-level property with balcony railings, fences and doors painted in sky blue. It is pure Aegean in style. The hotel's air-conditioned rooms sit conveniently around its pool. A children's pool ensures your youngsters will be safe, although of course you should still keep an eye on them because the hotel doesn't have an on-duty lifeguard at the poolside. What it does have, however, is a good choice of restaurants. The cuisine is largely international in style, presented either as a buffet so your children can help themselves to whatever takes their fancy, or as a sit-down-order-from-the-menu arrangement. Special menus are provided for children. The dessert menu with a good choice of ice creams and chocolate creations should keep them focused if your wish is to ensure they eat their food during the starter and main courses. The hotel offers well-equipped rooms, with necessities such as cots or bed guards provided on request, plus there is a playground designed for children's safety. The hotel lies beside the beach and close to Bodrum's many tourist attractions, making it a particularly suitable place to stay with a family.

***Rooms** 80, including family suites. **Rates** from around 100 YTL. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** restaurants with children's menus, swimming pools including a children's pool, playground, beachside location,*

baby-sitting service, cots and safety equipment provided on request. ***In room*** *AC, en suite bathroom, TV.*

MODERATE

Babaylon Hotel ★★ FIND

Ali Ören Mevkii, Çiftlikköy Bay, Çeşme +90 232 722 14 85; ***www.babaylon.com.tr****. Located overlooking Sakiz Island on the water's edge at Çiftlikköy Bay, Çeşme, and within easy walk of local amenities*

A large sprawling complex, the Babaylon Hotel is a lively place where children are clearly welcomed. Modern in appearance and with a brightly lit contemporary foyer, it offers children's play areas, children's gardens and a club with a programme of workshops and activities, plus a games room, swimming pools, including a toddler's pool, and various sports such as tennis, billiards and watersports. While your children are busying themselves with all the activities the hotel offers, you can enjoy the sauna and spa suite or the bar. Teenagers may even jump for joy at the fact that the hotel has a discotheque too. Guest rooms are air conditioned and well presented with lots of amenities, such as satellite television. Children's beds and cots are provided on request, and even buggies can be hired.

The Babaylon Hotel is located right by the beach at Çiftlikköy Bay and within easy distance of the city centre, making this hotel a good base to explore the area. There's a spectacular view of Sakiz Island from the restaurant and terrace too, so be sure to while away some time here.

Rooms *111 with sea views, including some family rooms.* ***Rates*** *from around 150 YTL.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *health centre, hairdresser, gardens, restaurant, several bars, discotheque, swimming pools, sports, children's club, children's playground, games room, babysitting service, car park, gift shop.* ***In room*** *AC, en suite bathroom, TV. Children's beds and cots available.*

EXPENSIVE

Hilton Izmir ★★

Gazi Osmanpasa Bulvari No 7, Izmir. +90 232 497 60 60; ***www.hilton.com****. Located in the heart of the city centre.*

Luxurious surroundings and fabulous views of the city are offered at the Hilton Izmir, but perhaps more importantly it also provides special family package rates depending on the time of year, a babysitting service, special children's menus at its restaurants, cots and high chairs always available on request and even a video hire service so your youngsters and teenagers can watch their favourite movie from the comfort of their hotel room. Other on-site amenities include sports such as tennis, a walking track and a health suite, plus a pool and several restaurants – its Colonnade Restaurant for breakfast, La Dolce Vita Ristorante for Italian and Turkish cuisine, and its Windows on the Bay Restaurant for International dishes. Guest rooms are well presented, too, and afford many facilities, as you would expect of a top-notch, five-star inter-national hotel. Location-wise, it is around 20 minutes or so drive from the Adnan Menderes

Hilton Izmir

Airport in Izmir, is within walking distance of the Kültür-park (see p. 134), the large sprawl of parkland with amusements, playgrounds and a zoo for the children, and overlooks Izmir Bay.

Rooms *381, with family suites available.* ***Rates*** *from around 500 YTL, with special family packages available.* ***Credit*** *AmEx, DC, MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *babysitting service, restaurants with children's menu, cots and high chairs, ATM, hairdresser, florist and gift shop, health suite, walking track, swimming pool, steam bath, sauna, solarium, laundry service, fitness suite and transport, business centre.* ***In room*** *AC, TV, en suite bathroom, children's video rental service, safety deposit box.*

FAMILY-FRIENDLY DINING

INEXPENSIVE

Dost Pide & Pizza ★★ VALUE

Şifne Caddesi No 27, Ilica, Çeşme. +90 232 723 20 59. Located just off the Ilica Beach at Çeşme.

As its name suggests, the Dost Pide & Pizza is a lively, family-orientated restaurant that prides itself on serving fast but hugely tasty food. Whether you are looking for a daytime snack of pasta with a light sauce and a salad, or a pizza with any one of a dozen or so toppings from the choice available, or you are looking for an informal place to dine in the evening, the Dost Pide & Pizza should deliver. The menu consists of mainly pasta and pizza dishes, with a selection of meat and vegetarian dishes too, all with salad and accompaniments like fries and garlic bread. The menu has a special section for children. It's one of the longest established eateries of its kind in Çeşme (the owner proudly displays a plaque stating it was founded in 1974), and is located just off the long stretch of beach at Ilica. You have the choice of eating inside, but on a warm summer evening the

temptation will no doubt be to sit outside, let your children dine informally and generally watch the world go by.

***Open** 11am–11pm daily. **Main Courses** 12 YTL plus drinks and desserts. **Amenities** high chairs on request, outside dining.*

MODERATE

Gemibaşi Restaurant ★

Neyzen Tevfik Caddesi, Bodrum. +90 252 316 12 20. Located just off the harbourside in Bodrum.

The Gemibaşi Restaurant is one of Bodrum's gems. Its team of chefs excels in creating Turkish dishes that are delicious, and if you want to sample some truly authentic local cuisine then this is the place to head for. On the menu you will find dishes such as levrek pilakisi, which is a type of casserole made from fish with lots of potatoes, onion and garlic. It is super. There are kebabs too, such as traditional dönar kebabs of sliced meat, and şiş kebabs, a skewer of cubed meat, which, although your children will probably be familiar with, these taste much better than anything they are likely to have had at home. They are certainly authentic. The Gemibaşi Restaurant has special dishes for children and a good choice of desserts. They are usually sticky and sweet, such as the pastry baklava. Of course, the really good thing about this restaurant is that it is located just off the harbourside, so you can sit inside or out and the prices are good value.

***Open** 12pm–11pm daily. **Main Courses** 15 YTL, drinks and desserts extra. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** children's menu, high chairs.*

EXPENSIVE

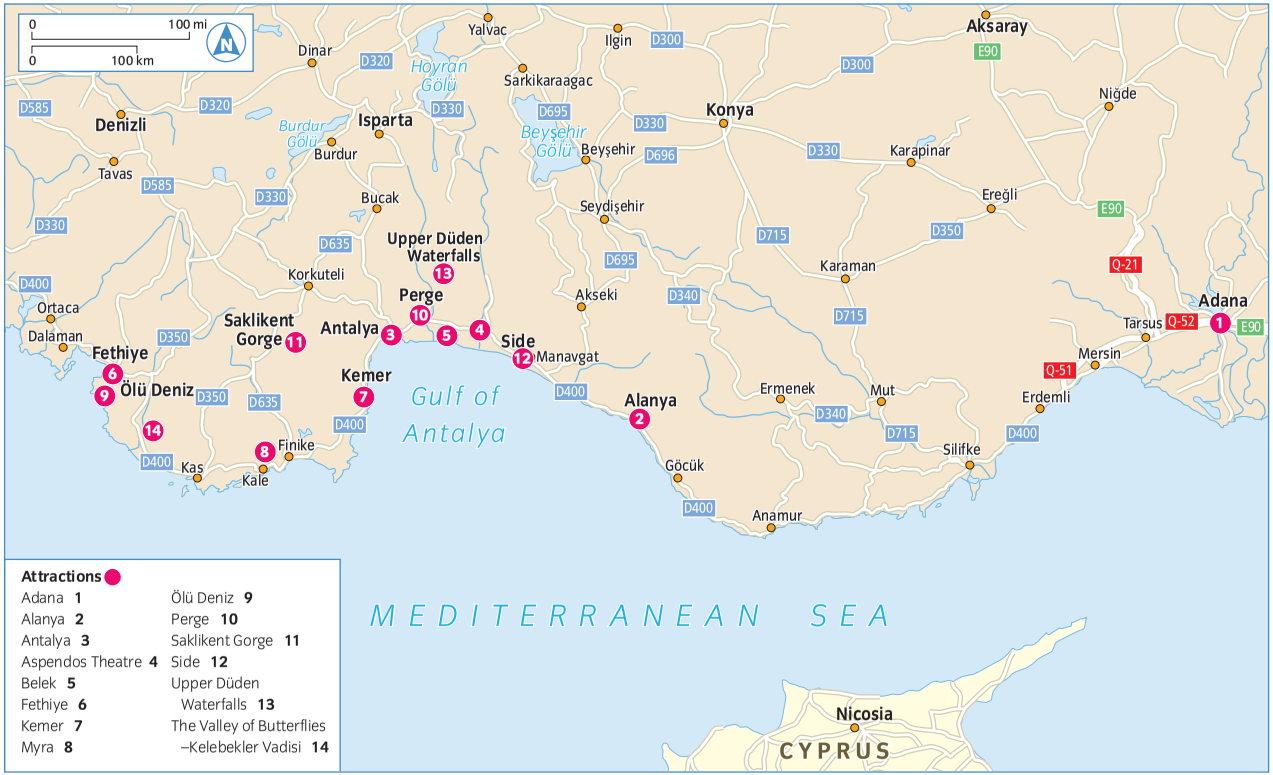
Mona Titti Restaurant ★

Ortapincer Caddesi 23, Içmeler, Marmaris +90 252 455 40 46. Located on the seafront at Içmeler, Marmaris

One of the first things you notice about the Mona Titti Restaurant, or a *restoran* as it is known in Turkey, is its elegant décor and crisp white linen tablecloths – a sure sign that you will be in for a special evening. Its menu is largely à la carte Turkish, with fresh ingredients sourced locally, especially fish, although there is a good choice of more European style dishes too. It doesn't offer a children's menu as such, but its team is happy to prepare versions of the main meals for smaller appetites. The restaurant, which is located in the slightly quieter Içmeler area of Marmaris, away from the often loud nightlife of the main tourist area, is frequented by both locals and visitors – always a good sign. It serves a good choice of wines and beverages too.

***Open** 12pm–11pm daily. **Prices** 3 courses with wine approximately 30 YTL. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** smaller portions served for children.*

6 The Mediterranean Region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Beyşehir Gölü
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Tavas
Bucak
Seydişehir
Ereğli
Upper Düden Waterfalls
Korkuteli
Karaman
Perge
Akseki
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Ortaca
Saklikent Gorge
Antalya
Side
Tarsus
Dalaman
Manavgat
Mersin
Fethiye
Kemer
Ermenek
Mut
Ölü Deniz
Gulf of Antalya
Alanya
Erdemli
Finike
Silifke
Kas
Kale
Göcük
Anamur
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Nicosia
CYPRUS
Attractions
Adana 1
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Perge 10
Saklikent Gorge 11
Side 12
Upper Düden Waterfalls 13
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Stretching from Patara and the town of Fethiye in the west, along the coast characterised by long stretches of beaches and secluded coves, and past the towns of **Antalya**, **Alanya** and **Adana** to **Hatay,** where it nudges the South East Anatolia region, the Mediterranean region of Turkey is one of the most popular areas of the country for family holidays.

In the main, it shares the accolade with the Aegean region. This is largely due to its climate of long, hot summers and mild winters, plus the fact that the region offers lots for families to do in terms of attractions, activities such as swimming and sailing and safe beaches to have fun.

The region, often known as the Turkish Riviera, revolves around its capital, the beautiful Antalya – a town of boulevards lined with palm trees leading down to its award-winning Antalya Kaleiçi marina and beaches. Antalya is Turkey's most important holiday resort. Its old town, Kaleiçi, with its tiny streets and specialist shops, can be fun for families to explore. Several museums with sections especially for children, festivals, a park where you can touch dolphins and an aquapark add to youngsters' enjoyment.

Throughout the region, you can explore ancient sites, including **Perge** the finest example of an ancient city in this area with the ruins of a theatre, city gates and tombs clearly visible, as well as the outstanding 2,000-year-old **Aspendos Theatre** where children of all ages will delight in hearing their own voices echo back to them from the area of stone seats of this remarkably intact amphitheatre. Also worth seeking out is the ancient site of **Myra** close to Kale. It is said to be the birthplace of St Nicholas, otherwise known as Santa Claus, and has some spooky tombs carved into rock faces. Be sure to visit Fethiye, standing on the site of the ancient city of **Telmessos**, with its ruins including tombs, a theatre and a castle dating back centuries.

Farther along the coast places to visit include the **Bey Daglari National Park**, the picturesque villages of **Kaş** and **Kale**, the larger town of **Belek** and the bustling tourist towns of **Side**, **Alanya**, **Kemer** and **Adana**.

As per the rest of Turkey, the Mediterranean region has a good selection of hotels and restaurants that have tailored their services for children. Many hotels provide safety equipment, cots and babysitting services on request, while restaurants offer special menus and facilities like baby-changing areas.

ESSENTIALS

Getting There

By Plane By far the easiest way to reach the Mediterranean region of Turkey is by plane. Major airlines, such as **Turkish Airlines, Atlas Jet, British Airways, KLM** and **Lufthansa** (see p. 34) are among those that fly into the region from

destinations throughout Turkey, such as Istanbul or Izmir, or further afield.

International flights, in the main, tend to be directed to **Antalya Airport** (*+90 242 330 36 00*) or to **Bodrum** or **Dalaman** in the Aegean region (see p. 34). There is a smaller airport at **Adana** (*+90 322 435 91 86*) in the Mediterranean region too. Road networks to and from the region's airports are good and well signposted.

By Rail Southern Turkey is not particularly well served by train services due to the Taurus Mountain range that slices the country in two. **Turkish State Railways** (TCDD – ***www.tcdd.gov.tr***) runs a special direct **train–bus connection** between Istanbul and Antalya at most times of the year. In summer it is more frequent. With young children in your party it might be easier and more comfortable to take a **direct flight** to Antalya from a major European city or a domestic flight from Istanbul.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Tourist Information Offices

The Mediterranean region of Turkey covers a huge area and you will probably find it is not possible to see everything you would like to during a short holiday. Family holidays are, after all, about relaxing together and having fun, as well as seeing some of the country you are visiting. With this in mind, it may be a good idea to contact the tourist office in the nearest town to where you are intending to stay. The main towns, such as Antalya and Adana, have offices in the centre of their tourist areas as well as at their airports.

Adana
Valilik Binasi C Blok Kat 3-4, Seyhan, Adana *+90 322 363 14 48*. Şakirpaşa Airport, Seyhan, Adana *+90 322 436 92 14*

Alanya
Damlatas Caddesi No1, Alanya, *+90 242 513 12 40*

Antalya
Anafartaler Cad No31, Antalya *+90 242 247 76 60*. Antalya Airport *+90 242 330 30 30*

Fethiye
Karagözler Mah., Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi, Iskele Mey No1, Fethiye *+90 252 614 15 27*; ***www.fethiye.net***

Hatay (Antakya)
Cumhuriyet Mah., Şehit Mustafa. Sevgi Caddesi 8, Antakya *+90 326 214 92 17*

Kaş
Meydan, Yat Limani, Kaş *+90 242 836 12 38*

Mersin
Ismet Inönü Boulevard, Liman GiriCi No5, Mersin, *+90 324 237 19 00*

Osmaniye
Dr Ahmet Aklan Caddesi, Çiçek Işhani, Osmaniye *+90 328 813 56 23*

Useful websites for tourists

www.gototurkey.co.uk

www.tourismturkey.org

www.oludenizbeach.com

Orientation

The Mediterranean region is the southernmost area of Turkey and links the Aegean region at Patara with the South East Anatolia region at Hatay. For the most part it hugs the coastline, but the region also goes 100km or so inland and takes in such fascinating cities as **Isparta,** where two great natural parks, the **Kasnak Mesesi** and the **Sütcüler Sigla,** are located. The region's major towns and cities include **Antalya**, **Side**, **Belek**, **Adana** and **Alanya**. The country's capital, **Ankara**, is around 400km due north.

Getting Around

The easiest way to get around the Mediterranean region of Turkey is by **hire car**. With so much to see and do, and some areas being quite remote, there will be a lot of food snacks and drinks, changes of clothes and buggies to carry around so a car is by far the best option. All the major towns and cities, plus the airports, have car-hire company offices (see p. 34 (Chapter 2)). If you're considering going off the beaten track, such as visiting historic sites or remote bays, then be sure to hire a 4x4 vehicle.

Another option is to travel by **bus**. The bigger towns and cities, such as Antalya, Fethiye and Alanya, have extremely good bus networks. Inner city centres are served by **dolmuş** (shared minibuses) with their ultimate destination displayed on a plate at the front of the bus. In **Fethiye**, the dolmuş minibuses also run to nearby resorts, such as **Calış** around 5km away, **Hisarönü**, **Ovacık** and **Ölü Deniz**. Outer city areas and nearby towns tend to be served by larger midi-buses. From Antalya, for example, you can hop on a midi-bus at the bus

Ölü Deniz, Fethiye

terminal and travel to Kemer, Finike, Kas, Side, Belek and Alanya.

A number of companies run **buses** at regular intervals, including **Varan** and **Ulusoy** (see p. 35 (Chapter 2)). **Antalya** also has a **tram network**, which runs from early morning through to around 10pm, and all towns and cities have **taxis** (see p. 35).

PLANNING YOUR OUTINGS

If you're travelling close to the centre of the big towns and cities you should easily find places to stop for refreshments and public toilets, although if venturing further afield be sure to take plenty of drinks, food snacks, toilet paper, tissues and baby-changing stuff with you. A bottle of water and soap or wipes for hand washing would be good too. The facilities may be limited, especially in the countryside or near ancient ruins, so you may have to improvise. Always take a good road map with you too, and plenty of colouring books, crayons and games. In the summer months, especially in the afternoons, the sun in the Mediterranean region can be vicious so always take plenty of high-factor sun protective cream and always make sure you and your children wear a hat and light clothing that covers arms and shoulders.

FAST FACTS

Buses Telephone the **Antalya Bus Terminal** (*+90 242 331 12 50*) or the **Fethiye Otogar Bus Station** (*+90 252 614 35 31*) for information on bus services throughout the region. From these stations most services depart to and arrive from the major towns and cities of the region.

Medical Emergencies
Emergency *112*
Antalya: An-Deva Hospital emergency health team *+90 242 312 67 67*.
The Antalya Dentist Association: *+90 242 237 52 52*, can give contact details for dentists throughout the region
Fethiye: State hospital emergency team: *+90 242 613 35 48*.

Money Exchange Antalya has three main money exchange centres, two in Cumhuriyet Caddesi and one in Kazim Ozalp Caddesi. All other major towns and cities have centres too, although most banks and hotels will exchange money.

Toilets Like the rest of Turkey, there tend to be public toilets in the centre of bigger towns and cities only, so it's always advisable to use the facilities of restaurants when you stop for refreshments. Always carry some toilet paper with you as it is not always provided.

WHAT TO SEE & DO

Children's Top 10 Attractions

1. **Climbing** on the ruins of the 9th-century Alanya Castle and looking out to sea 'on the watch' for pirates. See p. 154
2. **Seeing** the tiny streets of Kaleiçi, and haggling for a chocolate pastry in a bazaar. See p. 165
3. **Splashing** in the waters at Antalya's Dedeman Aquapark. See p. 163
4. **Hearing** your own voice echo in the 2,000-year-old Aspendos Theatre, near Antalya. See p. 165
5. **Taking** a journey to Köprülü Canyon and enjoying water rafting and kayaking See p. 170
6. **Laughing** out loud at the antics of the dolphins in Antalya's Dolphinland, and maybe even taking a swim with them. See p. 163
7. **Cycling** along the quayside at Fethiye and seeing the turquoise sea, tall ships and sailing yachts. See p. 155
8. **Learning** to drive a go-kart at the Speedland Go Kart Centre in Antalya. See p. 171
9. **Studying** the brightly coloured butterflies in Kelebekler Vadisi, one of the bays of Fethiye, known as The Valley of Butterflies. See p. 160
10. **Sailing** the waters on tiny brightly coloured boats from the harbour at Side. See p. 157

Child-friendly Events & Entertainment

Antalya Altin Portakal (Golden Orange) Film and Art Festival ALL AGES

Held every year in the autumn, the Antalya Altin Portakal (Golden Orange) Film and Art Festival features the best Turkish and international films made during the previous year, including those especially created for children. It runs for over a week at Sabanci Glass Pyramid Congress centre in Antalya. A programme of featured films and special events is available from the organisers or the tourist information office.

Autumn. The Sabanci Glass Pyramid Congress, Exhibition Centre and Fairground, 100.Yil Bulvari Kültür Parki, Antalya. +90 242 238 54 44; www.altinportakal.org.tr

Aspendos International Opera and Ballet Festival ALL AGES

If your little girls aspire to being ballerinas and adore the stage and dance, then they will love visiting the Aspendos Ancient Theatre in Antalya during the Aspendos International Opera and Ballet Festival. Major works are performed in the 2,000-year-old structure, one of the best preserved ancient amphitheatres in the world. Along with ballet and opera performances, there's a programme of modern dance shows especially for children.

June and July. Aspendos Ancient Theatre, Antalya. +90 242 243 88 49; www.kultur.gov.tr

Kemer Carnival ★★ ALL AGES

Every spring the Kemer Carnival almost brings this sophisticated tourist resort to a standstill. Its colourful procession is attended by visitors and residents alike who come for miles to join in the fun. Children from little tots right through to teenagers will love the chance to see favourite cartoon characters, dancers and musicians as they parade along Kemer's main streets. A festival is usually held near the marina afterwards.

Spring. Throughout Kemer's streets.

The Sabanci Glass Pyramid Congress and Exhibition Centre and Fairground

ALL AGES

Located in the Konyaalti Quarter of Antalya, the Sabanci Glass Pyramid Congress and Exhibition Centre regularly hosts events, such as music and dance festivals, that are ideal for children and teenagers. Its programme of events is available direct or from the tourist information office.

All year. Sabanci Glass Pyramid Congress, Exhibition Centre and Fairground, 100.Yil Bulvari Kültür Parki, Antalya. +90 242 238 54 44; www.altinportakal.org.tr

Towns & Cities

Adana

Adana isn't so much a tourist area, more a town where locals go about their daily business. However, with a couple of exceptionally good **museums** displaying artefacts and weaponry, and some mosques, including Turkey's largest, the **Sabanci Central Mosque**, which is built along the same lines as the great Blue Mosque in Istanbul, it is a good place to go for a family excursion. The town lies on the Seyhan River and is surrounded by plains given over to agricultural crops. It's an area known particularly for its cotton and textiles. History tells us that the town was where Alexander the Great defeated the Persian king Darius. A town of two halves, it has an old quarter and a more modern centre. One of the liveliest places to visit is the covered bazaar, where your youngsters will have a chance to haggle for trinkets, sweets and handicraft items.

Alanya

If your children fancy playing pirates – or being on the look out for them – then Alanya is one of the best places to do it. It has a long history associated with these seafaring sailors and their dubious business practices. **Alanya Castle**, a 9th-century fortress, complete with thick non-penetrable walls and towers, dominates the harbour and at one time would have been one of the town's most important buildings as it protected the dockyards from such tyrants. Ruins of the old dockyard, which dates from the Selcuk period, can still be seen jutting out of the water. Today, Alanya retains its historic past. Its **old**

quarter has lots of streets, alleyways and courtyards for youngsters to explore. In contrast, the town is also a thoroughly modern and vibrant place with modern shopping malls, hotels and sports centres.

Antalya

Antalya is a bustling city of palm-tree-lined avenues that has grown around the ancient city walls that contain its historic heart, the old town of **Kaleiçi**. Your children will love the chance to wander down its narrow little streets and peek into its tiny shops, including several selling patisserie goodies. No cars are allowed in the old quarter so they will be safe. From here, it is an easy walk to the charming little harbour area, which is full of atmosphere and some good restaurants. Almost all welcome children at any time of day, and offer a menu of smaller meals, ice creams and soft drinks. The Mediterranean region's largest city, Antalya is the hub of local life. It is cosmopolitan and offers something for everyone, from designer fashions for teenagers to toys for the younger ones in its shopping malls, an **aquapark**, a **zoo** and a couple of good beaches, **Konyaaltı Beach** to the west and **Lara Beach** in the opposite direction, and a **marina** from where boats can be hired for a day's sailing or a short cruise. The city is ideally located for short trips to the beach resort of **Kemer**, **Kalkan** and **Kaş** (see p. 157).

Belek

If your family has a passion for **golf** then head out to Belek, the Mediterranean region's premier golfing destination. It's contemporary and lively. Several clubs offer courses for beginners and intermediates to learn the art of hitting the ball – more than once. If, however, it's only dad and the boys who are the golfers, there are plenty of other things for the non-golfers to enjoy. There are long stretches of sandy beach, for instance, safe waters for swimming, health spas and beauty centres, watersport complexes and shopping malls. Many hotels have children's clubs and almost all have restaurants catering for children with special menus, high chairs and buggy stores among their offerings.

Fethiye

Fethiye is, on first impressions, a sprawling town that centres around its bay and quayside where tall ships and boats of all sizes can be seen bobbing in the water. On closer inspection, however, you'll find that it is surprisingly compact and easy to navigate and get around. There are lots of opportunities for families to go sailing, scuba diving, swimming or banana-boat riding. For the more adventurous members of the family there's paragliding, windsurfing and waterskiing too. All these are offered from quayside specialists or from the **tourist information office** (see p. 150). As Telmessos,

Attractions
Antalya City Walls 1
Antalya Yacht Harbour 2
Aqualand and Dolphinland 3
Atatürk Kültür Park 4
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SOĞUKSU
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TAHILPAZAN
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VARLIK
BALBEY
KIŞLA
DENIZ
BAHÇELIEVLER
MELTERN
SELÇUK
BARBAROS
KALEICI
KILIÇASLAN
SINAN
HAŞIM IÇAN
Toroslar Cd
Mimar Sinan Cd
Kazim Karabekir Cd
Hamidiye Cd
Turgut Reis Cd
Derya Cd
Anafartalar Cd
Tonguç Cd
Şarampol Cd
Çatalköpru Cd
Adnan Menderes Blvd
Evliya Çelebi
Fahrettin Altay Cd
F. Okyar Cd
Yildiz Cd
Çakrak Cd
Piri Reis Cd
Yüzüncü Yil Blvd
Milli Egemenlik Cd
Ismet Paşa Cd
Ali Çetinkaya Cd
Tarik Akıltopu Cd
Teoman Paşa Cd
Hizir Reis Cd
Sht. Binhaşi Cengiz Toytunç Cd
Cumhuriyet Cd
Recep Peker Cd
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Pamir Cd
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Sabanci Glass Pyramid Congress, Exhibition Centre and fairground
Atatürk Park
Tourist Information Office
The Bazaar
Antalya City Walls
Kaleici (Old Quarter)
Atatürk Kültür Park
Aqualand and Dolphinland
Konyaalti Beach
Karaalioglu Park
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
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N

the town was once at the heart of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and affords ancient ruins of a Roman Theatre and a 15th-century **castle** believed to have been built by the Knights of St John, plus outstanding Lycian Rock Tombs. Its old town, **Paspatur**, is well worth exploring. The town is characterised by its backdrop of the massive Taurus Mountain Range, which in winter is usually snow capped, and forests of incense trees and olive groves. It also has a series of beautiful bays, the most notable of which is **Kelebeklar Vadisi**, The Valley of Butterflies (see p. 160), located at the foot of a valley. Your children will delight in the colours of the butterflies. There's also the beautiful picture-postcard lagoon of **Ölü Deniz** (see p. 159), one of the most photographed bays in the world. The whole coastline of Fethiye has little cafes that welcome children, apart from the quieter bays and beaches where it is advisable to pack a bag of drinks, snacks and other day-to-day necessities as amenities are scarce.

Kemer

A sprawling mix of quality hotel and tourist apartment blocks, interspersed by shops full of designer fashions and à la carte restaurants, Kemer was the Mediterranean coast's first purpose-designed holiday resort. It centres on its **marina**, and tends to attract holidaymakers keen to part with larger sums of money than the average. Sophisticated and elegant, it nonetheless caters for children and there are a few attractions that might suit them along the beachside, in particular a small but well-tended play area. **Kemer Beach** (see p. 157), for instance, has a few watersports to enjoy, along with safe swimming waters. Its surface is a tad pebbly, but it is kept beautifully clean. The smaller resorts of **Beldibi and Tekirova** lie close by.

Side

Side is a town of contrasts. Its **old town** is brimming with tiny little hotels and shops, all contained within its historic city walls that stand on a headland stretching down to the sea, while on either side, two glorious **sandy beaches** seem to go on forever. Numerous restaurants and shops have sprung up alongside the beaches, and these areas have become tourist locations in their own right. One, affectionately known as **Sand Village**, is a hive of activity almost all year round. Children will love the chance to go out for a trip on one of Side's brightly coloured little boats, while teenagers will be tempted by the discos and the thought of dancing the night away to the latest sounds. Along with the old city walls, the town boasts a massive **Hellenistic theatre**, the largest in the area and capable of seating around 17,000 people for special music

SIDE

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Ozal Cd
605.Sk
Kenan Evren Cd
603.Sk
1009.Sk
Atatürk Blvd
Kaktüs Sk
602.Sk
613.Sk
Ozal Cd
Kiremithane Cd
Begonya Sk
Ozal Cd
1
Side Beach (Western)
Begonya Sk
Side Cd
Sarmaşik
Nilufer Sk
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA
Otogar
Side Cd
Liman Cd
Side City Gate – Vespasian Arch
4
Side Museum
Byzantine Basilica
2
Agora
Yasemin Sk
Ancient Theatre
Turgut Reis Cd
Liman Cd
Karanfil Sk
Sorbolli Sk
Hanimeli Sk
Gül Sk
Menekşe Sk
SIDE OLD TOWN
3
Side Harbour
Mercan Sk
Zambak Sk
Nergiz Sk
Lale Sk
1
Side Beach (Eastern)
Barbaros Cd
5
Temples of Apollo and Athena
Attractions
Side Beach 1
Side City Gate – Vespasian Arch 2
Side Harbour 3
Side Museum 4
Temples of Apollo and Athena 5

and theatre events. You'll also find two temples here – the most notable is the **Temple of Apollo**, a landmark attraction.

Best Beaches

East Beach and Cleopatra's Beach ★

With its fine sand that stretches for miles and safe swimming waters, East Beach is ideal for letting your children work off their energy making sandcastles and playing games. It is in stark contrast to Cleopatra's Beach which is much quieter. They lie either side of Alanya, which is known for its bays. There are lots of opportunities for the children to take banana boat rides here in the shallow waters.

Kaputas Beach, Antalya ★

Spanning the length of one of the prettiest bays in Antalya, the Kaputas Beach offers white sands where shade umbrellas are provided and there's safe swimming water. It is well signposted from the centre of the city.

Konyaalti Beach

This beach consists of lots of little beaches and is located a few kilometres west of Antalya. It is more picturesque than ideal for a sandcastle-making session because the beach areas are quite pebbly. With high mountains as a backdrop, and sweeping around a bay, it is hugely popular with families nonetheless. Extremely long, almost to the point that you get a sense of not being able to see where it ends, the beach areas have super-safe waters in which to swim and lots of watersports on offer. Umbrellas provide shade from the sun and there's a good choice of cafes for refreshments and toilet facilities.

Lara Beach

Around 12km due east from Antalya, Lara Beach is a pretty, supremely quiet beach. It is also very sandy, making it ideal for a get-away-from-it-all day making sandcastles and enjoying the safe waters.

Moonlight Park Beach ★★

Kemer's gloriously long and sandy beach, the Moonlight Park Beach, is, in reality, much, much more than your average stretch of sand. It's a sprawling area of amenities designed very much for the tourist. There's a children's club with games and workshops, a dolphinarium with bottlenose dolphins, the stars of regular shows, and several swimming pools. They all centre around an open-air amphitheatre that hosts cultural events and shows most of the year.

Ölü Deniz, Fethiye ★★

A beautiful bay with a soft sandy beach and turquoise waters, the Ölü Deniz is probably the most photographed bay in the whole of Turkey. A short distance away are the beaches of Hisarönü and Ovacık.

Olymbos Beach

This beach is most notable for its location. It has trees and shrubs as a backdrop and is close to the ancient site of Olymbos, an important town dating from

around 200 BC. Sandy and safe, it is ideal for a family outing.

Patara Beach, Patara ★★
Located in Patara, the birthplace of St Nicholas, this award-winning beach is a full 17km in length, sandy and exceptionally clean.

Side Beach ★★
Side Beach is long and sandy, and has the added bonus of providing sunset views that align almost perfectly with its Temple of Apollo and its ancient theatre that stand on its seafront. Side Beach is understandably popular.

West Beach ★★
Alanya's West Beach is a hive of activity. It seems there's every conceivable family-orientated attraction here, from banana boat rides, boating and waterskiing to, unusual for Turkey, a couple of amusement halls. Restaurants and cafes line the beachside.

Natural Wonders & Spectacular Views

Koprulu Canyon National Park ★ FIND
An area of outstanding beauty, the Koprulu Canyon National Park offers the chance for all the family to cycle, explore and admire the wildlife, flora and fauna. There are picnic areas and restaurants, so there's no fear of being in the middle of nowhere when the baby wants to feed or your 5-year-old wants to visit a toilet. The park has rivers, waterfalls and parkland. Rangers are always on hand to offer advice on where to go for the best views, and nature trails are marked out. The park lies inland from Side and Antalya, close to Tasagil and is well signposted.

The Valley of Butterflies – Kelebekler Vadisi ★★
More than 40 different species of butterfly, including the *Danaus chtsippus*, the *Pieri rapos* and the *Euglapia quadripunctia* can be seen in Kelebeklar Vadisi, otherwise known as The Valley of Butterflies. It is located at the foot of a valley in one of the beautiful bays of Fethiye. You are especially likely to see the butterflies in spring and summer. Children will delight in their bright colours, everything from yellow to crimson. A beach lines the bay so when your little ones get a bit tired of looking at butterflies, there's always the chance to make sandcastles or swim. There are a few amenities but not many, so be sure to pack baby-changing things, drinks and snacks. A good way to reach the bay is by boat from Fethiye harbour.

Tlos ★
Children of all ages will be captivated by the story of Pegasus, forever associated with Tlos, and the hauntingly beautiful ancient tombs cut into the rock face that look like something out of Harry Potter. Tlos is one of the oldest residential sites in Turkey and dates back to Lycian times. As the stories go, Tlos was the home of the mythological winged horse Pegasus and his rider Bellerophon. There's a temple to Bellerophon

cut into the rock too. Other structures to see from the period include the acropolis, a theatre and a bath complex. Although an historical site with few amenities for children as such, there's a little cafe close by for toilets and refreshments.

Tünektepe Hill

It's a bit of a drive, but a trip to the top of Tünektepe Hill, Saklikent, which is around 15km or so from Antalya, will provide one of the most spectacular views of the Mediterranean region of Turkey. A restaurant and a holiday complex on the top provide the chance to break up the journey a tad. In winter, the area is a renowned for its skiing.

Upper Düden Waterfalls ★★

Located around 14km northeast of Antalya, the Upper Düden Waterfalls are spectacular. You can actually walk behind the cascade of water, although you might want to think twice about taking small children across the walkway. If you do take them, hold on to them extremely tightly as it's easy to lose your footing, although if you do slip you will only plunge into a rock pool. Not far away are the **Lower Düden Waterfalls**. These are a different thing altogether. The water drops quite alarmingly down rocks and cliffs to the sea below, and the closest you can get, understandably, is on a viewing platform safely off to one side. The view is spectacular – and little kiosks around the viewing areas offer the chance of refreshment too. **Kurşunlu Waterfalls** and **Nilüfer Lake** a few kilometres farther on are other places of wonderful natural beauty.

Upper Düden Waterfalls

Nature Reserves, Parks & Gardens

Antalya Zoo ★★ GREEN

Kepezaltı, Antalya +90 242 247 76 60.

More than 750 animals of nearly 90 different species can be found at the Antalya Zoo in Kepezaltı. Among them are alligators and snakes, which will be sure to make your little ones shriek, along with apes and cheetahs. They'll love the African Ostriches as they playfully move around their enclosures too, and enjoy watching the numerous bird families that include cranes, pelicans, storks, ducks, hens, pheasants, pigeons and even gulls. There are parrots and songbirds too. This is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Antalya, and sees thousands of visitors every day. Children can learn about animals that are under the threat of extinction and how the zoo is working to protect them through a series of posters and workshops. They can see animals being fed and, because enclosures are designed to resemble natural habitats, see how they would live if they were in the wild. Antalya zoo has refreshment outlets, toilets and picnic areas. On a glorious sunny Mediterranean day, a visit to see the animals in the zoo followed by a picnic on the lawns will be a great family day out for sure.

***Open** 9am–5pm daily. **Admission** 15 YTL adults, 8 YTL children.*

Aqualand ★★ VALUE

Aqualand, Dumlupinar Bulvari Konyaalti, Antalya. +90 242 249 09 00; www.beachpark.com.tr

A family holiday in the Mediterranean region of Turkey wouldn't be complete without a visit to Aqualand and its neighbouring Dolphinland (see below) – both are havens designed very much with children in mind. Aqualand, as its name suggests, is a purpose-designed complex full to the brim with water flumes and slides, some around 100m in length that twist and turn, and lagoon-style swimming pools. Many of the pools even have caves in which to swim and explore, and there's a wave pool, a whirlpool and another specially reserved for watersports. Crazy River is an area where children can take a raft down a slide into a pool, while young children of 5 years and under have their own supervised playground and water area. The complex has been carefully thought out, and there are plenty of restaurants with menus tailored for children, and toilet and baby-changing facilities.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily, with reduced winter times. **Admission** 40 YTL adults, 25 YTL children, under 4s free. **Amenities** restaurants, baby-changing facilities, under-5s playground and pool.*

Beydaglari Natural Park, Antalya

Located 12km south of Antalya.

Otherwise known as Olympos, the Beydaglari Natural Park is

located not far from Antalya and is a wilderness of pine trees, rivers and parkland. A series of nature trails can be taken to appreciate its rich flora and fauna, and there are picnic areas where everyone in the family can enjoy playing and eating in the great outdoors. The park is well signposted.

Dedeman Aquapark, Antalya ★★

Dedeman Aquapark, şirinyali Mh Eski Lara Yolu No 26, Antalya. +90 242 316 44 00; www.depark.com.tr

With special areas for under 5s, small children's pools and various flumes, water slides, swimming pools and watersports, the Antalya Dedeman Aquapark is a must for a family day out. As you would expect, there are kiosks selling chocolate and snacks, cafes with special menus for children and toilets with some good baby-changing and freshening-up facilities. Conveniently, the Dedeman Aquapark has a bowling alley too, which is good if you have older children who are not so keen on splashing about in the water. Perhaps mum and dad can take it in turns to mind the younger ones, between playing a few games in the alley.

***Open** 10am–6pm daily. **Admission** 40 YTL adults, 25 YTL children, under 4s free.*

Dolphinarium ★

Moonlight Park Beach, Kemer, +90 242 814 41 00.

Bottlenose dolphins are the stars of the show at this popular family venue. Several shows a day are held and your children will love the chance not only to see their antics but swim with them when the show is over. The Dolphinarium is close to a **children's club** where a programme of special events and craft workshops is held, several swimming pools and lots of restaurants, cafes and snack bars. A visit here can, therefore, take up the whole day.

***Open** 10am–6pm daily, until 7.30pm in summer. **Admission** 30 YTL, children 4–9 20 YTL, under 4s free. Swimming with the dolphins is extra, from 150 YTL.*

Dolphinland ★★ VALUE

Dolphinland, Dumlupinar Bulvari Konyaalti, Antalya. +90 242 249 09 00; www.beachpark.com.tr

Located within the neighbouring complex to Aqualand (see left) to the west of Antalya, Dolphinland is a popular venue for dolphin shows. A programme of shows features its usual residents; Suera and Alisia, the park's bottlenosed dolphins; Mila and Melina, their two white whales; some sea otters and the cutest sea lion ever called Susha. Your children will love to see them perform and eat the fish thrown to them as rewards. You can have your photograph taken with some of the stars of the show, and even swim with and touch the dolphins. A visit to Dolphinland and Aqualand can be a great day out for the family. There are restaurants, including the Dolphin Café, where special children's menus, along with drinks and ice creams, are served.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily, with reduced winter times. **Admission** 40 YTL adults, 25 YTL children, under 4s free. 135 YTL to swim with the dolphins.*

Düzlerçami Park, Antalya ★

GREEN

Located around 20 km from Antalya.

Other than tiny tots, children of all ages will love Düzlerçami Park. It has been created to resemble a natural habitat for deer and mountain goats and a series of hand-on exhibits show how the animals are the subject of a conservation programme. With patience, it may also be possible to glimpse doves and eagles, which are known to live in the area. The park is both educational and fun. Nearby is the Güver Canyon, an amazingly deep crevice in the natural rocky landscape. In fact, it's said to be around 2km long and more than 110 metres deep. The park and the canyon are well documented on tourist information maps and are located around 20km from Antalya. There are picnic tables and chairs provided in designated picnic areas, although cafes, restaurants and toilets are in short supply.

Karaalioglu Park, Antalya ★

FIND

Karaalioglu Park, off Park Sol, Antalya.

One of the landmark parkland areas of Antalya, Karaalioglu Park is where you'll see locals taking in the air, children playing ball games and hide and seek, nannies taking their charges out for a breather and older folk resting on the low walls and benches; it is very much a community park. Elegant with statues and palm trees, it has a cosy little tea garden, which offers a good selection of snacks and cakes, plus some fabulous views out over the Gulf of Antalya to the Atatürk Park that lies on the other side of the bay, and the Beydaglar Mountains behind. There's an interesting tower in the gardens, too, a former lighthouse that dates from the 2nd century BC. Its significance may be a little lost on young children though, but it is attractive and worth looking out for.

Waterplanet Aquapark ★

*Waterplanet Aquapark, Okurcalar Mevkii, Alanya. +90 242 527 51 65; **www.waterplanet.com***

This park, not far from Alanya and Side, promises that you will have 'crazy fun' and they are right. With 23 slides designed for children of all ages, lots of swimming pools and the chance to raft on a 350m long artificial river complete with a strong 'current', you and your youngsters can spend hours here. There's a children's disco and a programme of fun events tailored to children too, plus several restaurants and snack bars with goodies such as burgers and ice cream on the menu for even the most discerning young tastebuds.

***Open** 10am–6pm daily, with reduced winter times. **Admission** 40 YTL adults, 25 YTL children, under 4s free.*

Historic Buildings & Monuments

Ancient City Walls and the Clock Tower of Antalya ★

The remains of the ancient city walls that are believed to date from somewhere like 200 BC and would, at one time, have surrounded the city of Antalya can still be seen. Some especially good ruins lie not far from the marina. Children will love to explore and play games around them. The Clock Tower that you can see from the city walls at Kalekapisi Square would have been part of the old city fortifications centuries ago.

Aspendos Theatre, Aspendos ★★

40km east of Antalya, 4km north of Serik

Constructed in the 2nd century AD, the Aspendos Theatre is a huge structure that lies in the countryside 40 or so kilometres east of Antalya. The theatre holds around 15,000 people and is a popular attraction for visitors as well as being a venue for opera, theatre, musical, ballet and drama shows. Nearby are the remains of a church and agora, plus one of the largest aqueducts in Turkey.

***Open** 8.30am–5pm daily, until 7pm in summer months. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Kaleiçi ★

If visiting Antalya, be sure to schedule in some time for exploring the Kaleiçi area of the city. It's full of interesting little shops and restaurants, almost all providing a menu suitable for children and restrooms for baby changing, but significantly it is also the historic heart of the city. Kaleiçi is characterised by its narrow streets lined with quaint little shops, boutique hotels and centuries-old traditional houses and buildings that have been beautifully restored, some in

Aspendos Theatre

bright colours. Your children will love it as it rather resembles a film set in places. The area is given added character by the fact that it lies adjacent to the marina and the quayside areas, plus a short walk to some of the city's beaches.

Mamure Castle, Anamur, near Alanya ★

Located on the coast road about 1½ km from Anamur.

One of the best examples of Byzantine architecture in the Mediterranean region of Turkey, the Mamure Castle sits proudly on a headland along the coast from Alanya. It is well worth the trip. Your children will have huge fun playing warriors amongst the fortifications that are often used as a set by filmmakers.

Olympos

A journey to Olympos, a few kilometres inland from Antalya, is well worth the time and trouble of packing a trunk full of picnic foods, drinks, clothing and several bottles of sun cream. Not only do you pass through citrus groves, which always seem to prompt a few squeals of delight from the back seat from children not used to seeing oranges and lemons growing on trees, but you also get to see one of the most impressive ancient sites in the area. The ruins of this ancient city are remarkably intact and can be found on the southern side of Mount Tahtali. What this area is most famous for, however, is the fact that the mythological winged horse, Pegasus, and his rider the ancient hero Bellerophon were said to have slain a monster here. The story should entertain the little ones for a while – perhaps even get them to look out for the mythological horse in flight.

Patara ★★

Said to date from around 1500 BC, the settlement that became the ancient city of Perge was an important one in its day. It is said to have been the birthplace of Apollo and St Nicholas, otherwise known as Santa Claus. Its harbour is, today, considered an important historic monument. Right next to the harbour is a glorious sandy beach so if the journey tires the children or they are not interested in the story of Santa Claus or seeing an old harbour they can always head for the sand and water.

Roman Theatre, Fethiye ★

Built in the second century on the ruins of an ancient Greek theatre, this Roman theatre is an outstanding example of structures of the period. It is remarkably well preserved and stands not far from the centre of Fethiye and so is easy to find. Children will love the chance to play at acting. Nearby are the ruins of a medieval castle dating from the 11th century where they can pretend to be soldiers. Fethiye stands on the site of the ancient city of Telmassos, and ruins dating back centuries can still be seen scattered around the town.

The Top Museums

Fethiye Archaeological Museum

Fethiye Archaeological Museum, off Ataturk Caddesi, Fethiye. +90 252 614 11 50.

The town of Fethiye can trace its history back to Hellenistic and Roman times and, as such, many artefacts have been found in the area over the years. The most notable pieces are displayed in the Fethiye Archaeological Museum. Younger children may not find ceramics and bits of stone interesting, but older children and teenagers should find the maps and exhibits educational. There are objects from the Ottoman, Byzantine and Persian periods too, while in an Ethnographical Hall there are examples of centuries-old crafts such as weaving. If a visit gets all too much for younger children there's always a little cafe for refreshments and a sit down.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily except Mon. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children. **Amenities** cafe.*

Güllük Dagi National Park Museum ★

Güllük Dagi National Park Museum, Güllük Dagi National Park.

Located at the entrance to the great Güllük Dagi National Park near Antalya, this delightful museum was created to celebrate the natural flora, fauna and wildlife of the park, as well as telling the story of Termessos, an ancient fortified city that once stood on the site. Its ruins can still be seen on the western slopes of the Güllük Mountain range within the park. Among the ruins are sections of the original city walls which youngsters will delight in exploring, several towers, a gymnasium, theatre and tombs, plus Hadrian's Gate, one of the best-preserved monuments to be found in the Antalya area. It dates from around 130 AD and is said to be a triumphal arch dedicated to the Emperor Hadrian. In terms of a family day out, there is plenty to see and explore, and your youngsters will no doubt imagine themselves as Roman soldiers of old. The park and its ruins are absolute 'musts' to visit.

***Open** 8am–8pm daily, with reduced times in winter. **Admission** 10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Side Museum

Side Museum, Selimiyekoy Manavgat, Antalya. +90 242 753 10 06.

Despite its name, this museum is located in Antalya. It's unusual in so far as it was, at one time, a fully functional **Roman Baths**, dating from the second century. Restored and opened as a museum in the 1960s, you can see what would have been the dressing room, the cold room or Frigidarium, the Sudatorium, Tepidarium and the Caldarium or sauna, all rooms of varying temperatures. Throughout are artefacts such as ceramics, lamps and statues that might have once adorned the building. It may not be your usual family holiday outing, but it is one that will

educate youngsters about bathing practices of old in a hands-on way.

Open *8am–5pm daily in summer, and closed Mon in winter.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Suna-Inan Kirac Museum, Antalya

Barbaros Mh. Kocatepe Sk. No 25, Kaleiçi, Antalya. *+90 242 243 42 74;* ***www.kaleicimusum.org***

Housed in two renovated and brightly decorated buildings, the Suna-Inan Kirac Museum brings the history of Turkey's Mediterranean region more or less up-to-date, well up until the 19th and 20th centuries anyway. While it doesn't offer exhibits or areas designed specifically for children, it does have rooms that tell of Turkish culture. For instance, there's one room dedicated to explaining the culture behind growing and preparing Turkish coffee. A little restaurant has been created to resemble a traditional Turkish cafe, and there's an area used as a library and for special cultural events.

Open *9am–6pm daily, closed Wed.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.* ***Amenities*** *restaurant.*

The Archaeological Museum, Antalya ★★ VALUE

Antalya Archaeological Museum, Konyaalti Caddesi, Antalya. *+90 242 238 56 88.*

Step inside the Archaeological Museum in Antalya and you and your family will get a glimpse of this region of Turkey's rich history. While small children may get a little bored by ancient relics and pots, and may prefer to venture outside in the museum's extensive gardens, older children and teenagers should find the artefacts dating to the Palaeolithic Age and the Ottoman period fascinating. There is a children's section, however, where hands-on exhibits may engage all ages for a time. Some of the most notable exhibits in the museum include the dual-coloured ceramics that were created by man's own hands around 5400 to 8500 BC. Highlights include finds from the ancient city of Perge in the Perge Theatre Hall. Ruins still exist on the original site of Perge, around 18km from Antalya and can be visited. There are also Bronze Age and Byzantine exhibits from recovery digs, plus an Ethnological Collection of Selcuk and Ottoman crafts. The museum, which has 13 halls in total including a Mosaics Hall, Icons Hall and a Jewellery Hall, as well as an open gallery area, often has additional opening times during the height of the season.

Open *9am–6pm daily, closed Mon.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.* ***Amenities*** *children's section.*

Arts & Crafts

There are many crafts made by hand in the region, and available to purchase as gifts or souvenirs to take back home. The most popular are gold and silver items, leather goods, copper kettles and pots, ceramics and wooden trinket boxes with inlaid patterns. And don't forget the

sweets, including Turkish Delight in all manner of flavours which your children will love without doubt, and carpets and antiques if you have a deep pocket and want something unique to send back home.

Your children will love finding handmade trinkets and toys in the side streets off the Damlatas Caddesi in Alanya, and your teenagers will find jeans and T-shirts in, what seems, every design and colour. **Alanya** is known for its silk and many of the little specialist shops around this area sell it as clothing or by the metre. In nearby **Ehmediye Village**, you can buy handmade lace and linens.

In **Antalya**, you'll find craft shops and specialists selling more unusual souvenirs such as sculptures and paintings in the old quarter around Kaleiçi, while in **Side** everything from handmade jewellery to ceramics can be found in the little shops and stalls that line the streets. In **Perge's Colonnaded Street** local women kneel on the pavement with their handmade lace and trinkets set out in front of them.

Child-friendly Tours & Excursions

Most of the tours offered around this part of Turkey are based on historic sites and, realistically, taking children of any age on many of these will be hard going. The whole area has some undoubtedly wonderful sites, but their significance is likely to be lost on very young children. Much better perhaps is to take one or two shorter trips, broken up with beach and water park experiences. One of the best ways to sample the rural area of the Mediterranean region and one that your children are likely to enjoy, however, is to take a jeep safari. You'll see lovely little villages, mountain views and wildlife and you'll also find lots of areas where you can pull in and enjoy a picnic. All major towns along the coast have companies offering jeep safaris, so wherever you are staying simply head down to the seafront or visit the local tourist information office.

Karain Cave ★

On the eastern side of Çan Mountain, well signposted and around a half-hour drive from Antalya.

Your children will love the chance to explore the interconnecting chambers of the Karain Cave. On the eastern side of Çan Mountain, well signposted and around a half-hour drive from Antalya, the cave revealed a vast collection of priceless artefacts when it was discovered a few years ago. Some were dated to 160,000 BC, making them some of the oldest finds in the Med. The more valuable pieces are displayed in major museums across the country, but you do get a taste by visiting the little museum at the entrance to the cave where some are on display.

***Open** hours vary. **Admission** free.*

Köprülü Canyon ★

Medraft, Yeşilbahçe Mah. Portakal Çiçeği Bulvarı, Hüseyin Kuzu, Antalya. +90 242 312 57 70; www.medraft.com.

Köprülü Canyon, not far from Antalya, offers the chance for older children to enjoy white-water rafting and kayaking. The rapids are not too challenging and it's a great place to try the sports if you've never done it before. A few companies offer excursions through the canyon, including Medraft, who also offer cycling adventures and jeep safaris. The immediate area has picnic areas and restaurants with menus suitable for tots through to teenagers. You can smell the aroma from barbecued food for miles.

Saklikent Gorge ★★

Located around 25km from Fethiye.

Widely considered one of the 'must see' places in southern Turkey, although not necessarily suitable for very young children, the Saklikent Gorge will astound mums, dads and older children without any shadow of a doubt. Icy waters have cut a narrow, exceptionally deep gorge, in fact around 300m deep, into the mountainside high above Fethiye over thousands of years, with the result being a wonderful place to explore. The authorities have constructed a walkway so it's possible to walk its 18km length in safety but, with a fairly flimsy handrail to protect against falling into the waters, it is advisable to hold firmly on to the hand of lively youngsters. The walkway is wide enough for a buggy though. Families, both local and visitors, will spend the whole day here. There's a picnic spot and several little restaurants for refreshments.

For Active Families

Antalya Kaleiçi Marina and Leisure Centre

The Antalya Kaleiçi Marina and Leisure Centre, Yat Limani, Antalya. + 90 242 327 76 79.

Offering fun for all the family, the Antalya Kaleiçi Marina and Leisure Centre is a bustling hive of activity most days. There are sailing lessons, dinghy races and the chance to hop on board a full-size yacht and try your hand at manoeuvring it in the coastal waters. If anyone isn't keen on sailing, the award-winning marina has lots of souvenir shops, fashion shops and friendly little cafes to while away some time too. The area is popular in the evening when restaurants open their doors to families keen to enjoy the ambience created by the lapping of the water, the old city walls being gently lit and the occasional street entertainer. Many restaurants have special menus created with children in mind, offering burgers and fish finger style meals with shakes and ice creams, or if your children are a little more adventurous why not try a Turkish meze. Lots of little dishes of local delicacies are brought to your table – it's a great way for the family to taste local cuisine and if they don't like it they can move on to another dish.

Diving and Snorkelling ★

Dolphin Dive, Iskele Caddesi 23, Alanya. +90 242 512 30 30
Nautilus Diving Centre, Likya Caddesi 1/A, Kas. +90 242 836 20 85;
www.nautilusdiving.org

Aksuna Sports, Arapsoyu Mevkii, Kemer, Antalya. +90 242 814 51 32

Rainbow Dive Centre, Yat Limani, Alanya. +90 242 248 12 57

The waters off the Mediterranean region's coastline are good for diving and snorkelling. Dive schools are dotted around most of the main tourist areas, including **Dolphin Dive** in Alanya, the **Nautilus Diving Centre** in Kas, **Aksuna Sports** in Kemer and the **Rainbow Dive Centre** in Alanya. All have a team of PADI instructors and offer scuba diving trips for beginnings through to experienced divers.

Fethiye Surf Centre

Fethiye Surf Merkezi, Pk.170, Çalýp Plajý, Fethiye. +90 242 622 07 53;
www.fethiyesurfcenter.com

Offering windsurfing and kitesurfing for all ages and levels of expertise, the Fethiye Surf School is located on Calis Beach in Fethiye. It teaches the sport to enjoy while on holiday, along with taking it to international licence levels for keen surfers. Equipment can be hired. While this may not suit many members of the family, especially the much younger ones, teenagers especially may find they never leave the beach during your stay.

Golf for families ★

The Robinson Club Nobilis, Acisu Mevkii, Belek. +90 242 710 03 00;
www.nobilis.com.tr

The Gloria Golf Club, Acisu Mevkii, Belek. +90 242 715 15 20;
www.gloriagolf.com

The Antalya Golf Club, Belek Tourism Resort, Belek. +90 242 725 59 70;
www.antalyagolfclub.com.tr

The National Golf Club, Belek Tourism Resort, Belek. +90 242 725 46 20;
www.nationalturkey.com.

Some impressive golf courses lie along the Mediterranean coast, so if dad and the teenage lads in particular are keen golfers it may be the perfect opportunity for mum and the girls to go off shopping around the designer fashion houses. The best place for this golf/fashion combination is Belek, the coastline's premier golf resort. There are a number of top notch golf courses, including the **Robinson Club Nobilis** and the **Gloria Golf Club**, both with 18 holes, the **Antalya Golf Club** and the 27-hole **National Golf Club**. The latter is especially attractive with a backdrop of pine trees.

Speedland Go Kart Centre

Speedland Go Kart Centre, Serik Cad No 499, Havaalani Karşisi, Antalya. +90 242 340 29 85.

Children of all ages, not to mention some mums, dads and teenagers too, love to let off their frustrations in a go kart given half a chance, and the Speedland Go Kart Centre is just the place to do it. A little snack bar serves

refreshments and provides a place to sit if it's a case of one parent minding tiny children and watching from the sidelines, while the others drive at sometimes considerable speeds around the track.

***Open** 10am–5pm daily. **Admission** varies on duration but expect to pay around 20 YTL for a basic session. **Amenities** snack bar.*

Shopping

The Mediterranean region, like the rest of Turkey, is a shoppers' paradise, but be aware that shop owners will think you are interested in buying if you stop to look at anything. In general, window-shopping is a complete mystery to the locals. If you find something you fancy buying then it is acceptable, even expected, that you will want to barter. If you pay in cash, particularly sterling or euros, you should be able to get a better deal. As a family, bartering can be huge fun and you'll find that shop owners will be only too happy to haggle, albeit at times out of amusement, with your children too.

There are bazaars and markets in most towns, plus many have much larger modern shopping centres. One is the **Migros Shopping Centre** (***www.migros.com.tr***) in Antalya. With safe play areas complete with climbing frames, 'street' entertainers, eight cinema halls and restaurants serving everything from special children's menus and fast food to sushi and gourmet cuisine, plus the most extensive selection of shops imaginable, it could, arguably, have something to keep every member of the family amused for hours – even the non-shoppers. Open from 10am every day, it is an air-conditioned haven. There are top women's fashions, DVDs and a seemingly endless number of outlets selling children's clothing and computer games. The facilities are good too, so if you have babies or toddlers that need changing or need somewhere private to feed, then this centre has the place to do it. To say it is child-friendly is absolutely spot on.

Other good shopping areas are along **Isiklar Caddesi** and **Atatürk Caddesi**.

Antalya is famous for its preserves and jams; you'll be able to buy them at specialised little shops throughout the town, especially in the old quarter around Kaleiçi. Here you'll also find more unusual souvenirs, such as sculptures and paintings.

Other towns throughout the region have shopping experiences too. **Side** and **Belek** are wonderful if you like designer fashions, leather and jewellery, plus Side has lots of little craft-style shops selling everything from ceramics to paintings in its narrow streets. The main thoroughfare through the historic **Perge**, Colonnaded Street, is also a great place to find handmade lace. **Fethiye**, too, has a souk-style shopping complex inside the Old City walls at Paspatur where you can find homemade preserves, leather belts and handbags, jewellery, carpets and cloths, plus a whole

host of souvenir items like local ceramics. Try getting your children to haggle for a bracelet made of local handmade beads or some Turkish Delight. It comes in lots of flavours – the orange one is exceptionally yummy.

Fethiye also has a bazaar area in the city centre, although it's largely full of food stalls. It's clearly signposted if you want to visit for the experience and open throughout the day and even into the evening when fresh fish can be cooked and served in one of the little restaurants that line its route.

In **Alanya**, the main shopping area is centred on a network of streets around the **Damlatas Caddesi**, a relatively upmarket street that heads in the direction of the harbour. Here you'll find lovely textiles, especially silk for which Alanya is known, and designer fashions, leather goods and ceramics. The side streets tend to have more gimmicky goods and clothing such as jeans. Head out to **Ehmediye Village** too for linens – it's well signposted from the centre of Alanya.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

Prices quoted are for a double room in low season.

INEXPENSIVE

Hotel Alp Pasa ★★ VALUE

Barbaros Mah, Hesapci Sok, Kaleiçi, Antalya +90 242 247 56 76;

Fithiye Bazaar

***www.alppasa.com**. Located in the old quarter of Antalya, near the famous Hadrian's Gate landmark, within easy reach of the modern city centre of Antalya, and a leisurely walk from the harbour area and the beach*

The Alp Pasa is a delightful Ottoman-style mansion hotel dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Recently renovated, its décor echoes the traditional local style of the period throughout in deep tones of terracotta and cream, with wooden features and lots of stonework. Even the guestrooms have ornamental ceilings, handmade wooden doors and period fireplaces. All guestrooms, including the hotel's family room, which has children's beds provided and cots on request, are located around a pretty central mosaic courtyard used for dining al fresco in the summer, and a small swimming pool. On-site facilities include a couple of restaurants, one serving

Hotel Alp Pasa, Antalya

international cuisine and with dishes suitable for small appetites, and an à la carte eatery that has a more romantic atmosphere. The Alp Pasa is located in the heart of the old town of Kaleiçi and within the inner castle and city walls of Antalya. As such it is convenient for most of the city's attractions, as well as restaurants and cafes, its harbourside area, parks and beaches.

Rooms *292, including a family room.* ***Rates*** *family room from around 100 YTL.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *swimming pool, parking, babysitting service, two restaurants with children's menu.* ***In room*** *TV, AC, en-suite bathroom, cots on request.*

MODERATE

Ölüdeniz Resort Hotel ★★

VALUE

Ölü Deniz, Fethiye +90 242 617 00 20; ***www.oludenizresorthotels.com****. Located around 12km from the centre of Fethiye and within walking distance of the Ölü Deniz lagoon.*

The Ölüdeniz Resort Hotel is a sprawling complex of accommodation that is ideal for families. It has a Mini Club designed for young children from 4 years up to around 10, with a programme of play events and workshops. There are also children's playgrounds, pools, an adventure area where youngsters can work off their energy, plus a T-shirt painting workshop. All areas specifically designed for young children are supervised by suitably qualified staff. A babysitting service and free cots are good extras. Mums and dads, older children and teenagers can enjoy the exercise classes and a health spa, mountain bike hire, a shooting range, ball sports like basketball and volleyball, watersports such as canoeing and snorkelling and a couple of tennis courts. Guestrooms, all 222 of them, 30 of which are family rooms, are also well equipped. Located right beside the beach, the resort hotel is close to The Valley of

Butterflies – Kelebekler Vadisi – and of course the unbelievably beautiful Ölü Deniz lagoon.

Rooms *222, including 30 family rooms.* ***Rates*** *from around 300 YTL.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *informal and à la carte restaurants, bar, health suite with sauna, Turkish Bath and beauty treatments, sports, mountain bike hire, tennis courts, hairdresser, gift shops, children's club, children's playground, adventure area, baby-sitting service, cots on request(free).* ***In room:*** *AC, en-suite bathroom, TV.*

EXPENSIVE

The Concorde Resort & Spa ★★

Lara Beach, Antalya, *+90 242 352 26 26;* ***www.concordehotel.info****. Located right on the waterfront at Lara Beach, in the east of Antalya, 16km away from the city centre and 10km away from Antalya Airport.*

Step inside the Concorde Resort and Spa and you feel as if you have stepped into the lap of luxury – the subtle lighting of the foyer and the plush furniture sets the scene for the rest of the hotel. What this hotel does offer though is the chance to enjoy many amenities as a family. For instance, there's a playground area, playroom and special games events for young children of between 4 and 12 years, tennis, canoeing and pedalos for older ones from around 8 years and above, and sports like volleyball and watersports for teenagers. Competitions and shows designed for children are held regularly and there are discos for the older ones. There are swimming pools to suit all ages too. A health suite with sauna and fitness centre, and regular aerobic and aquaerobic classes may entice mums and dads away, but as the hotel offers a babysitting service and teenagers have plenty to occupy their time, slipping away for some 'me' time shouldn't be a problem. On-site restaurants provide a huge buffet for breakfast, which is always a good option when you have children as they can choose the food they want to eat, plus lunches and evening dining of Oriental, Italian, Turkish and à la carte cuisine.

Rooms *401, including family rooms.* ***Rates*** *from around 500 YTL.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *four swimming pools including a children's pool, children's club, play areas, health suite, sports and watersports, bars and internet cafe, babysitting service, free high chairs and cots provided on request.* ***In room*** *AC, TV, en-suite bathroom.*

FAMILY-FRIENDLY DINING

INEXPENSIVE

La Luna Restaurant ★★

VALUE

Harbourside, Alanya +90 242 513 61 79. Located right on the harbourside overlooking the boats at Alanya.

This is a fun and furious style of restaurant serving everything from a traditional Turkish meze meal comprising around 20 or so little dishes to Turkish kebabs and chicken grills. It does Mexican food in the form of fajitas, tacos and enchiladas, Italian food in the shape of pizzas, pasta and lasagne and a hearty menu of

steaks and vegetarian dishes. What sets this restaurant apart from the others though is the fact that all dishes are available in smaller versions for children. Of course, there's a good selection of drinks, and desserts too. La Luna runs cartoons on a big screen – just try tearing your children away. There's outside dining in warmer months.

***Open** 11am–11pm daily. **Prices** average three-course meal around 20 YTL. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** child-sized meals and high chairs on request.*

MODERATE

Moonlight Restaurant ★★

Barbaros Caddesi, Side +90 242 753 14 00. Located on the beachside at Side's East Beach.

If you want to gaze into your partner's eyes over a glass of wine and watch the sun go down across a sandy beach and out to sea you can do it easily at the Moonlight Restaurant in Side. Well that's if your children will let you of course. The Moonlight, as it is simply known locally, is a prettily presented restaurant with a good use of burnt orange in its décor – although the owner was considering a change of décor when I spoke to him so don't be surprised if it looks a little different when you visit. The menu is tempting with fish and seafood topping the choices, but there are lots of tasty sounding vegetarian, grills and local dishes too. A lengthy children's menu means that your little ones will almost always find something that suits them – fingers crossed. Alcohol is served, along with a good choice of desserts, such as baklava and ice cream. You can sit inside in the Moonlight, or enjoy one of the tables that the host likes to put on the water's edge so you can look out over the beach to sea.

***Open** 6/6.30pm–midnight daily. **Prices** around 25 YTL for a three-course meal. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** children's menu, buggy store and high chairs on request.*

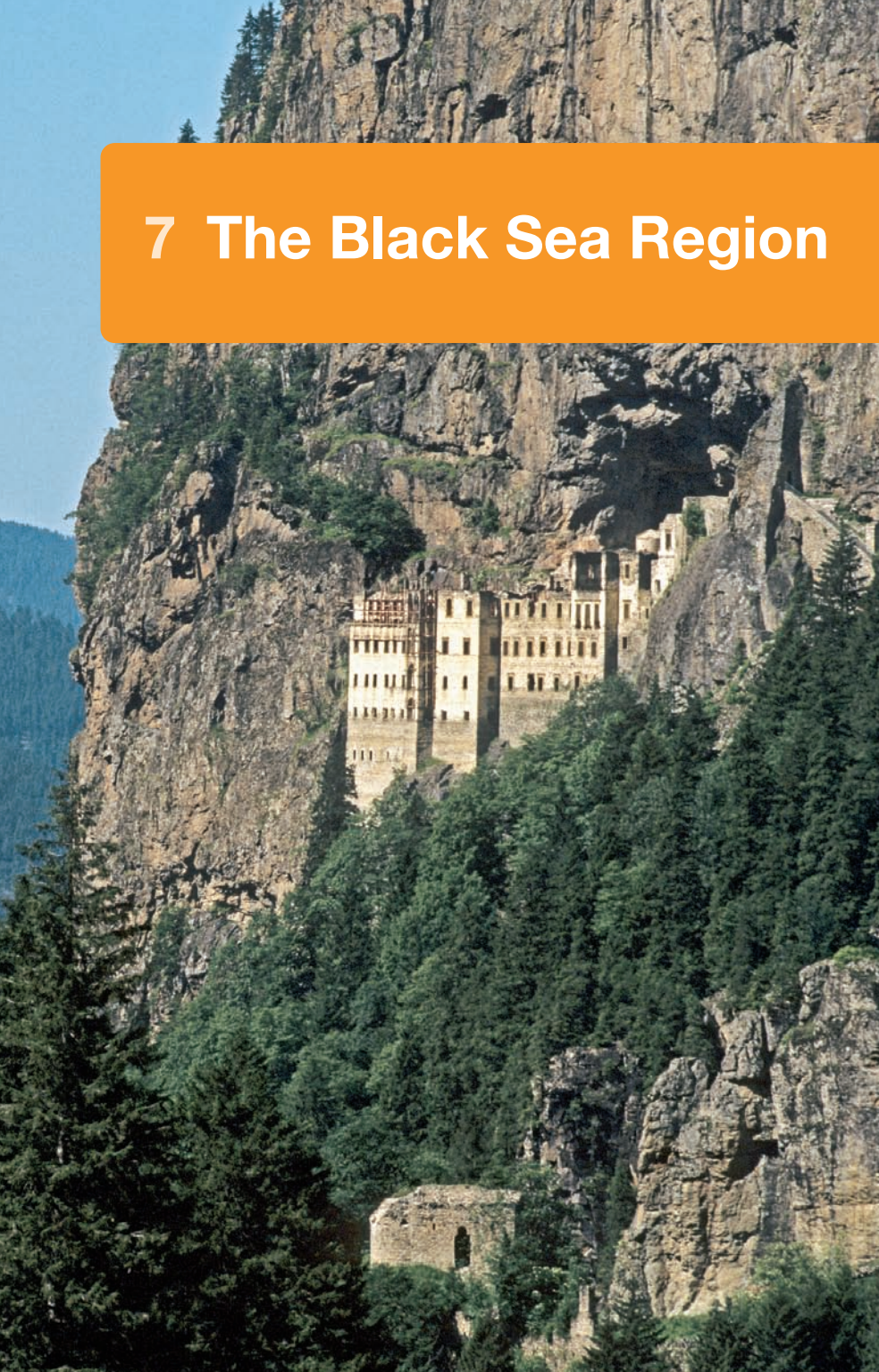
EXPENSIVE

Marina Restaurant ★★

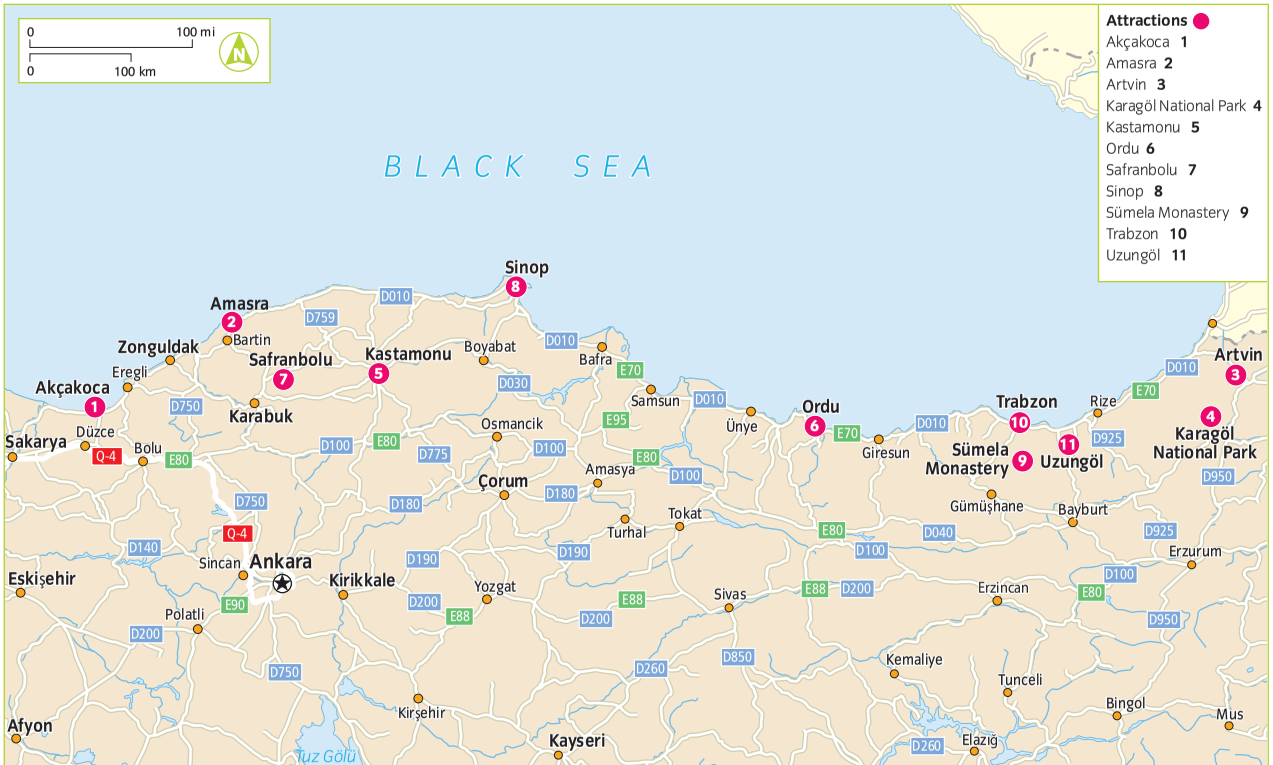
Mermerli Sk.Kaleiçi, Antalya +90 242 247 54 90. Located close to the harbourside and marina of Antalya's old town at Kaleiçi.

This beautifully elegant restaurant is housed in one of three 19th-century mansions that collectively form the top-notch Marina Hotel complex. The restaurant welcomes non-residents. Noted for its extensive fine wine list and its top quality French, Italian, Turkish and American à la carte cuisine, the Marina Restaurant is the perfect location for a refined, perhaps celebratory, meal. You can dine inside listening to the background piano player in his fine tuxedo or on one of the quiet terraces that overlook the gardens and pool. Whether your children will appreciate the artfully arranged dishes, fine glassware and linen napkins is, of course, another story.

***Open** 7pm–11pm daily, depending on the time of year. **Credit** AmEx, DC, MC, V. **Prices** around 60 YTL for an average meal. **Amenities** high chairs and buggy store.*



7 The Black Sea Region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BLACK SEA
Attractions
Akçakoca 1
Amasra 2
Artvin 3
Karagöl National Park 4
Kastamonu 5
Ordu 6
Safranbolu 7
Sinop 8
Sümela Monastery 9
Trabzon 10
Uzungöl 11
Sinop
Amasra
Zonguldak
Bartin
Safranbolu
Kastamonu
Boyabat
Bafra
Artvin
Ereğli
Akçakoca
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Samsun
Ordu
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Rize
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Ünye
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Karagöl National Park
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Tokat
Turhal
Erzurum
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Pölatli
Kemaliye
Tunceli
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The Black Sea region is a vast area, one of the largest in Turkey in fact, and yet because of its long shape is relatively easy to navigate. It is, however, one of the least visited by tourists, especially those with children, so you and your family will have to be keen enthusiasts of scenery and landscapes to really appreciate its beauty. While there are a couple of national parks, such as the **Ilgaz National Park** (see p. 194) near Kastamonu, attractions that might appeal to children like water and theme parks are definitely not a major feature of the region.

Stretching from the coastal areas around **Akçakoca** (see p. 184) to the west, the Black Sea region runs right through the Kackar Mountains to the city of **Artvin** (see p. 184) which lies close to the country's border with the Eastern European/Western Asian country of Georgia. Along the way it passes through the town of **Amasra** (see p. 184), a pretty town that huddles around its harbour, and the UNESCO city of **Safranbolu** (see p. 186), which, with the historic **Trabzon** (see p. 186), is a highlight of the region. There are a few holiday resorts, notably **Sinop**, **Rize**, **Fatsa** and **Ünye** (see p. 186.), **Ordu** with its landmark castle and beaches (see p. 186) and the attractive bays of **Inkum**, **Amasra** and **Cakraz**, **Cide** and **Inebolu** (see p. 184).

While the Aegean and Mediterranean regions are famous for their beaches and holiday complexes, the Black Sea region is largely known for its breathtaking scenery. It is green with mountains and plateaux, forests dotted with villages, fields of tobacco and tea plantations, hazelnut orchards and fruit groves and, of course, its dramatic coastline of small beaches and coves. Along its coastline are fishing hubs. Anchovies, in particular, are caught in large numbers and play an important part in the Black Sea region's cuisine.

Hotels and restaurants are not as plentiful as you might expect to find in places like Istanbul or the holiday regions, but there are some good ones catering for children, particularly in Trabzon, Safranbolu and Rize.

ESSENTIALS

Getting There

By Plane Most people travelling to the Black Sea region of Turkey will arrive at the international airport in Trabzon, possibly via the airports in Istanbul or Ankara. From here the city is situated at the very heart of the local road and rail network. It will probably be in your best interests to hire a car at this point (see p. 34), unless you are staying in Trabzon and wish to take a taxi to your hotel before exploring the hire car options. There are buses to neighbouring towns from the airport. Ulusoy (*+90 212 471 71 00*, ***www.ulusoy.com.tr***) runs a reliable and frequent service. Hiring a car (see p. 34) is probably your best option though, particularly with all the luggage, buggies and the like necessary for a family holiday.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Tourist Information Offices

The Black Sea region has a number of tourist information offices in major towns and cities like Artvin, Bayburt, Ordu, Rize, Safranbolu, Akçakoca, Sinop and Trabzon, with staff members who are generally helpful and knowledgeable. There are much smaller offices dotted around the region too. Most have good books available on the history of Trabzon and Safranbolu in particular, plus leaflets on visitor attractions nearby. Be sure to pick up the **Tourist map of Turkey and the region** published by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Its places and roads are clearly marked.

Adapazari
Adnan Menderes Caddesi, Orman Bölge, Müdürlügü Binasi Kat 4, Adapazari; *+90 264 276 20 90*

Akçakoca
Cumhuriyet Meydani, Bahadir Yalçin Caddesi, No 10, Akçakoca; *+90 380 611 45 54*

Artvin
Cok Katli Otopark va Spor Kompleksi Kat 3, Artvin; *+90 466 212 25 07*; ***www.artvin.gov.tr***

Bartin
Kirtepe Mah., Asma Caddesi, Kuyuluyol Sk No 30, Bartin; *+90 378 227 61 01*

Bayburt
Valilik Ek Hizmet Binasi Kat 3, Bayburt; *+90 458 211 60 27*

Bolu
Stadyum Caddesi, Kültür Sitesi, Bolu: *+90 374 212 22 54*; ***www.bolukulturturizm.gov.tr***

Düzce
Gençlik ve Spor II Müdürlügü Hizmet Binasi Girişi, Düzce; *+90 380 524 91 33*; ***www.duzceturizm.gov.tr***

Giresun
Gazi Caddesi No 72, Giresun; *+90 454 212 31 90*

Gümüşhane
Valilik Binasi Kat 4, Gümüşhane; *+90 456 213 34 73*

Izmit
Oramiral Salim Dervişoluğlu Caddesi Sabanci Kültür Sitesi, Izmit; *+90 262 322 44 04*

Karabük
Valilik Binasi, Zemin Kat, Karabük; *+90 370 415 68 18*

Kastamonu
Rifat Ilgaz Kültür Merkezi Kat 2, Kastamonu; *+90 366 212 01 62*

Ordu
Valilik Binasi, A Blok Kat 3, Ordu; *+90 452 223 25 93*; ***www.ordukulturturizm,.gov.tr***

Rize
Eminettin Mah., Valilik Binasi Kat 5, Rize; *+90 464 213 04 26*

Safranbolu
Kazdağilioğlu Meydani No 1, Safranbolu; *+90 370 712 38 63*; ***www.safranbulu.gov.tr***

Samsun
Kale Mah., Gazi Caddesi No 72, Samsun; *+90 362 431 00 14*; ***www.samsunkulturveturizm.gov.tr***

Sinop
Yenimahalle Okulak Sok No 4, Sinop; *+90 368 261 30 23*; ***www.sinop.gov.tr***

Trabzon
Ortahisar Mah., Eski Valilik Binasi, Trabzon; *+90 462 326 07 48*; ***www.trabzonkulturturizm.gov.tr***

Ünye
Hükümet Konaği, Ünye; *+90 452 323 25 69*; ***www.unye.turizm.gov.tr***

Zonguldak
Mithatpaşa Caddesi Ismetpaşa Sok, Zonguldak; *+90 452 323 25 69*

Useful websites for tourists:

www.gototurkey.com

www.turkeytourism.com

Orientation

The Black Sea region of Turkey lies along its northernmost coast, bordered by the Marmara region and Istanbul to the west, the Ankara and Anatolia region to the south and the country of Georgia to the east. As its name suggests, the region lies beside the Black Sea, with the Ukraine opposite. Its major towns and cities include Akçakoca, Artvin, Amasra, Safranbolu and Trabzon, Sinop, Rize, Ünye and Ordu.

Getting Around

The Black Sea region's road infrastructure is well developed with main highways enabling relatively easy journeys from one area to another. For instance, there's a coast road that runs the length of the region, with main arterial roads such as the E80 and E89 highways linking major towns and cities. By far the best way to get around is by **car** (see Chapter 2, p. 34), but there is a reliable **train service** operated by the **Turkish State Railway**, the TCDD (***www.tcdd.gov.tr***) in the less mountainous areas, plus good bus networks, especially those provided by **Ulusoy (see p. 35)**. Local transport is by **dolmuş**, shared minibus taxis that run to dedicated routes, albeit without a strict timetable (see p. 35).

PLANNING YOUR OUTINGS

Despite affording many large towns and cities, the Black Sea region is especially mountainous with large rural areas. With this in mind, when you are packing up your family's belongings it is worth bearing in mind that if you go off the beaten track there are likely to be few facilities. Pack things like sun cream, hats, good walking shoes, baby-changing stuff and light snacks. Importantly, be sure to include plenty of drinks. With summer temperatures it is easy to get dehydrated, even though the

Black Sea region is probably the coolest of the Turkish regions. Also pack a change of clothes and swimwear in case you find a nice place to take a dip, or need to freshen up. Toilet facilities are likely to be scarce if you head off into the country, so be sure to use the amenities of any cafes or restaurants you may stop at along the way. Of course, as always, maps are essential and your best course of action would be to head off to the nearest tourist information office and grab yourself plenty of literature and maps before starting to explore.

FAST FACTS

Medical Emergencies Like the rest of Turkey, the emergency number to call is *112* and you will be taken to a hospital in the town or city nearest to you (see p. 43).

Money Exchange All the main towns and cities in the Black Sea region have money exchange centres, although you should find most banks and hotels will exchange money for you too. The centres tend to observe standard opening times, from around 9am in the morning through to 1pm.

Toilets You are likely to find few toilet facilities if venturing into the rural areas of the Black Sea region as, like the rest of Turkey, they tend to be provided in the centre of the larger towns only. They are not always modern and may sometimes even be just a hole in the ground, although the facilities on the highways tend to be more up-to-date. It is always advisable to use the facilities of restaurants or picnic areas when you stop for refreshments. Bay is for men, bayan for women. Always carry some toilet paper with you as it is not always provided.

WHAT TO SEE & DO

Children's Top 10 Attractions

1. **Climbing** aboard one of the horses at the International Equestrian Tourism Centre at Daday near Kastamonu and riding out into the countryside. See p. 194
2. **Seeing** the 'crown' created by the remains of the Giresun Fortress at the top of a hill next to the beaches, and climbing up to explore. See p. 190
3. **Splashing** as you whitewater raft in the waters of the Ilgaz National Park, or skiing on its Ilgaz Mountain. See p. 194
4. **Hearing** mum and dad haggle for some bargains in the Arasta, Old Bazaar, in Safranbolu, and having a go. See p. 194
5. **Taking** a trip to Amasra and exploring its small castle, the remains of two fortresses and its rock caves. See p. 184

6 **Laughing** as you join in the dancing at the Golden Hazelnut Festival in Ordu and sampling some of the delicious chocolate nut candy. See p. 183

7 **Cycling** in the lanes around Akçakoca and looking out for orchards full to the brim with hazelnuts, and then heading off to the market to buy some. See p. 184

8 **Learning** the steps of traditional dances as you join in the *dernek* festivities around the region, especially in Trabzon. See p. 183

9 **Studying** the brilliant frescos on the side of the ghostly Sümela Monastery, which sits high up on the side of a sheer rock face near Trabzon. See p. 191

10 **Sailing** the waters off Sinop and seeing the lush forest areas, the coves and the little harbours from a new perspective, and then dropping anchor for a swim. See p. 186

Child-friendly Events & Entertainment

Cultural Events in Kastamonu ALL AGES

Kastamonu Cultural Centre, Cebrail Mah., 2 Hükümet Caddesi No 2, Kastamonu. +90 366 261 60 23.

Be sure to call into the tourist information office (see p. 180) as soon as you arrive in the town to get an up-to-date programme of events at the Kastamonu Cultural Centre. This 200-seat theatre regularly hosts exhibitions and musical events, and has three art workshops-cum-galleries where collections of work by local and international artists are displayed. There are often events that are designed with children very much in mind, such as the summer festival of dance.

All year.

Dernek Festivals ★ FIND ALL AGES

Trabzon residents have long had a tradition whereby friends, family and neighbours gather for a festival known as a '*dernek*'. It usually takes place towards the end of July at homes or venues throughout the city. Everyone gathers for a feast and enjoys dancing into the small hours. There is usually lots of traditional music played on a type of small violin accompanied by flutes. If you manage to get invited be sure to go. The events are always lively and you and your children will get to see the 'real' Turkey. One of the dances performed by everyone, whatever their age, is known as the '*Horon*'. It is a folk dance symbolising happiness or sorrow that dates back centuries.

End July. Venues throughout Trabzon.

The Golden Hazelnut Festival in Ordu ★ VALUE ALL AGES

Every September the north coast town of Ordu hosts the hugely popular Golden Hazelnut Festival which attracts people from miles around. It coincides with the harvest of the hazelnuts for which the area is known. Parades, music and dancing go

on until the small hours, with chocolate hazelnut drinks consumed as well as a local delicacy, a hardish candy made from the nuts; your children will love it. The festival is held at various venues around Ordu, particularly in the central marketplace area. The tourist information office in the heart of Ordu (see p. 180) will have information on the programme of events.

September.

Victory Cup Horse Races

International Equestrian Tourism Centre, Daday. *+90 366 212 01 62.*

Held every year around the end of August, the Victory Cup Horse Races are events when the locals come out to party, watch the races and admire the horses. As visitors to Turkey, attending the races is a good way to mingle with locals and get a taste of daily life. The races are held at the International Equestrian Tourist Centre in Daday, not far from Kastamonu, and there is generally a good choice of stalls and cafes serving the local equivalent of fast food, such as kebabs, if you need a break between races. The atmosphere is exciting and your children will enjoy it.

End August.

Towns & Cities

Akçakoca

Located on the coast in the west of the region, not far from Kirklareli and surrounded by hazelnut orchards, Akçakoca is a pleasant place to spend some time. It has a few good hotels along its beaches, several restaurants catering for children and the remains of a small Genoese castle to explore. A statue of Akçakoca Bey – a Turkish leader of the 14th century after whom the town is named – stands in the heart of the town. Akçakoca has a harbour area dominated by a contemporary-styled mosque, plus inland a little there are lots of villages to visit.

Amasra

Amasra is a pretty, sleepy harbour-side town that can trace its history back many centuries. At one time it was considered an important religious town, and later a strategic trading place. Today, while it doesn't offer too much in the way of amenities for visiting families, it does have a small **castle**, the remains of a **Roman bridge**, the ruins of two **fortresses** and some **rock caves** to explore, several **mosques**, including the Burmalı Minare Mosque, Yörgüç Pasha Mosque, Mehmed Pasha Mosque, Iskele Mosque and the Sultan Beyazıd Mosque, mausoleums, and some art galleries (see 'Historic Buildings & Monuments' p. 189). Nearby is **Safranbolu** (see p. 186), which is well worth visiting so a trip could combine the two.

Artvin

Artvin is an attractive town that has been created over time on terraces overlooking the Çoruh River valley and its bridge. It has

a little **Georgian museum** to see, along with the Hatila River, the village of Ilıca and the Otingo hot springs. There are several mosques and churches used as mosques, including the Salihlibey Mosque, the İşhan (Kanlı) Church and Hamamlı (Dolisane) Church. Scenery-wise it is breath-taking – mountains, forests and lakes form its landscape. One of the best places to really appreciate its beauty is in the **Karagöl National Park** (see p. 188), where you and your children can follow nature trails, walk and cycle.

Kastamonu

The town of Kastamonu is one of the main centres of activity in the region, and is known for its top class horse riding centre, the **International Equestrian Tourism Centre** (see p. 194) at Daday, where the countryside and forests that surround it offer some good riding routes. It is also famed for its 12th-century **Byzantine castle**, a 13th-century mosque, the **Atabey Mosque**, and the **Ibni Neccar Mosque**, which dates from the 14th century. Its town-centre **Archaeology Museum**, **Ethnography Museum** and **Liva Paşa Mansion Museum** (see p. 192) tell the story of the town that dates back to these centuries and before. Among the displays are ceramics and tools found locally. Nearby, are the **Ilgaz National Park**, a noted ski and whitewater rafting centre (see p. 194), and the intriguing **Ilgarini Cave**, one of the largest in Turkey and open for you to explore.

Ordu

There is evidence that man lived in Ordu as far back as 3000 BC. It was known as a wealthy area to live for many centuries, making the exhibits in the town's little **Ethnographical Museum** (see p. 192) especially interesting. Ordu is worth a visit, especially in September when the town hosts the **Golden Hazelnut Festival** (see p. 183). Your children will love the chance to explore the ruins of the fortress at nearby **Giresun** (see p. 190), or head off to the **beaches** (see p. 188) for some serious sand-castle building.

Safranbolu

A visit to Safranbolu will feel a little like stepping back in time (see 'Historic Buildings & Monuments' p. 189). It has dozens of traditional Turkish period homes that look a little like they should be nestled in a tiny village in the heart of the English countryside. The buildings have exposed beams and galleried first floors. Such is their importance that Safranbolu has been named a UNESCO World Heritage site. While your children may not appreciate the styling of the architecture, because everything looks rather chocolate boxy, they will probably find it amusing. Safranbolu

also has mosques, Turkish baths, the **Cinci Han**, (see p. 195), a former commercial centre that is now a hotel, and ancient shopping mall-like walkways, once used by cobblers and shoemakers, to explore. Its bazaar, the **Arasta** (see p. 194), is well worth visiting to secure a bargain.

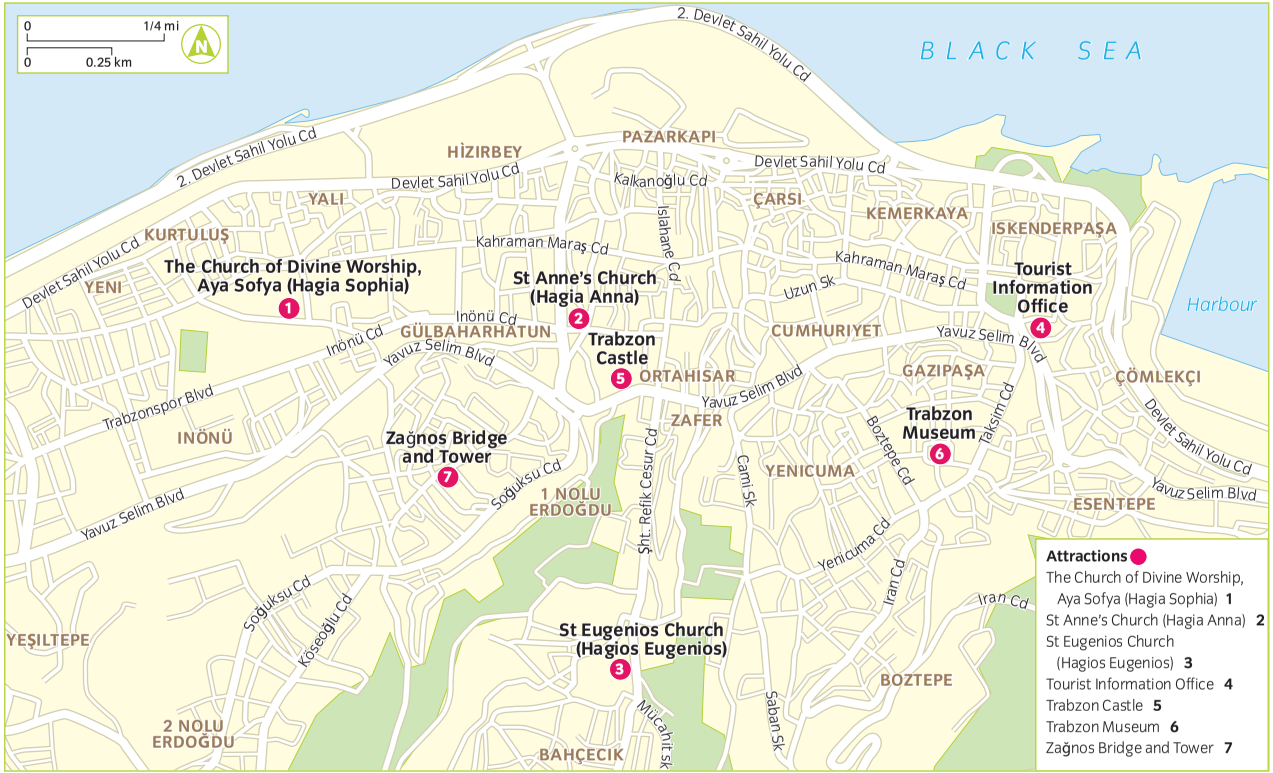
Sinop

Sinop, a pretty little natural harbour characterised by its rows of fishing and leisure boats, is famous for being the home of the mythological Amazon women warriors. Their leader, it is said, was called Sinope. Stories abound in the area of how they were mighty warriors and it should certainly capture your children's imagination. The town is also said to be the birthplace of the philosopher Diyojen. Sinop can trace its history back to around the year 4500 BC, and a few remains can be seen at its **castle** and on display at its small **museum** in Okullar Caddesi (*+90 368 261 19 75*). It has several mosques to see as well as beaches for your children to enjoy, plus a couple of natural parkland areas, Kustepe Forest and Türkeli Pine Groves Forest. While both have few amenities, they do offer the chance to walk in the countryside or cycle along nature trails.

Trabzon

If you make a base in the Black Sea region it will probably be in the large, cosmopolitan yet hugely historic city of Trabzon. It is arguably the most important and historic city in the Black Sea region, along with

Safranbolu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St Anne's Church (Hagia Anna) 2
Trabzon Castle 5
Tourist Information Office 4
Harbour
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Attractions
The Church of Divine Worship, Aya Sofya (Hagia Sophia) 1
St Anne's Church (Hagia Anna) 2
St Eugenios Church (Hagios Eugenios) 3
Tourist Information Office 4
Trabzon Castle 5
Trabzon Museum 6
Zağnos Bridge and Tower 7

Safranbolu. Full of character, it has lots to see, including **Trabzon Castle**, several churches and mosques including the **Church of Divine Worship** known as the Aya Sofya (Haghia Sophia) which is now a museum (see p. 193), **St Anne's Church** (Haghia Anna) and **St Eugenius Church** (Hagios Eugenios), and landmarks like the **Zağnos Bridge and Tower** (see p. 191). Trabzon has a few parkland areas, including the **Maçka-Altındere Valley National Park** and the **Sürmene Çamburnu forest recreation area,** plus it is surrounded by countryside characterised by hazelnut groves. Trabzon was once the capital of the medieval Empire of Trebizond, and evidence of its importance can still be seen today. It can trace its history back to the 7th century BC, and exploring the countryside will reveal remains of centuries-old structures, including early Byzantine and Genoese monasteries and castles. Nearby is the **Sümela Monastery** (see p. 191) and just along the coast the resort of **Rize** (see p. 195).

Best Beaches

Giresun Beaches ★

The beaches at Giresun are some of the best in the Black Sea region. Soft and sandy, they offer the potential for hours of fun for your young children. Your older children or teenagers may like to climb up the hill that lies next to the beaches and explore the remains of **Giresun Fortress** (see p. 190) that perches on the top. The castle was once an important building for defending the area.

Karagöl Kumluğu Beach and Bahçeler Beach, Sinop

Lying in coves with mountains and park wilderness as their backdrops, the Karagöl Kumluğu Beach and Bahçeler Beach at Sinop are great for long, relaxing days playing in the sand or swimming in the sea. There are not too many amenities as such, so it is a good idea to take picnic chairs and rugs, snacks and drinks. The town of Sinop, its attractive harbourside area and its collection of holiday villages and restaurants are within easy reach for a few more amenities.

Rize Beaches ★

The town of Rize itself stands at the foot of the Pontic Alps that seem to fall right into the Black Sea. Where they meet there are long, stretches of beautifully clean and sandy beaches, ideal for a family day relaxing by the sea. Nearby are hotels and restaurants, many of which cater for children by offering special menus, high chairs and buggy storage space.

Natural Wonders & Spectacular Views

Karagöl National Park, Artvin

Located around 25km from Artvin.

An outstandingly beautiful nature area, the Karagöl National Park offers the chance to walk along

Karagöl National Park, Artvin

nature trails, study wildlife and really get away from it all. There are alpine lakes and rivers, pine tree forests and plateaux. The nearest tourist information office is in Artvin (see p. 180) and has maps on how to find the park.

Nature Reserves, Parks & Gardens

Uzungöl, Trabzon

Located around 10km from Trabzon and well signposted.

Uzungöl, known as Long Lake, lies a short drive from Trabzon. It is an alpine lake surrounded by meadows and mountains, and is perfect for families that like to go off the beaten track to experience nature. Nearby are the Ayder Plateau and the Kaçkar Mountains, again both offering superb views and natural activities. If you or your youngsters are especially brave, you could try whitewater rafting or canoeing in the rivers.

Historic Buildings & Monuments

Atabey Mosque, the Ibni Neccar Mosque and the Mahmutbey Mosque, Kastamonu

Atabey Mosque, the Ibni Neccar Mosque and the Mahmutbey Mosque, Kastamonu. *+90 366 212 01 62 (tourist information)*

Dating from the 13th and 14th centuries respectively, the Atabey Mosque and the Ibni Neccar Mosque are good examples of architectural styling of the day. If your older children or teenagers are interested in history then these two mosques may be of interest to them. Nearby Mahmutbey Mosque with its lavishly carved wooden roof, one of the finest in Turkey, and its colourful decorative detailing almost certainly will. A visit may not be suitable for younger children but there are always gardens nearby for them to play.

Giresun Fortress

Gazi Caddesi No 72, Giresun. +90 454 212 31 90 (tourist information)

Located around 50km east of Ordu, this fortress was once a great building for defending the region from invaders. Today, there are only ruins left, but your children will love the chance to explore them. Perched at the top of a hill, the Giresun Fortress looks rather like a crown. It looks out over the town, its beaches and the countryside full of hazelnut orchards.

Haghia Sophia, Trabzon

Haghia Sophia, Trabzon. +90 462 223 30 43.

A church and museum, the Haghia Sophia, or the Aya Sofya as it is known locally, dates from the 13th century when Trabzon was the capital of the Empire of Trebizond. It stands on the seafront and is considered the most famous landmark in Trabzon. For centuries it was used as a mosque but now is purely a museum. Inside, there are Byzantine frescos on the walls, some of the finest examples of wall painting in Turkey if not the world. Nearby are the mosques of **Fatih** and **Yeni Cuma**, the **church of St Anne's** (Haghia Anna) built in the 9th century and the St Eugenius Church (Hagios Eugenios) dating from the 14th century.

***Open** 8am–5.30pm daily except Mon, with reduced opening times in winter. **Admission** 10 YTL.*

Kastamonu Castle

Off Gökdere Caddesi, Kastamonu.

Built by the Comnenes, a powerful family who ruled Trabzon in the 12th century, the Byzantine Kastamonu Castle is a reminder of when the town was considered an important trading centre. At one time it would have been large and majestic, and although it has fallen from grace a tad in recent years and is now used as a look out point, it will capture the imagination of your youngsters nonetheless. You can get inside and explore.

***Open** 10am–5pm daily in summertime, closed Mon. **Admission** 5 YTL.*

Mosques of Amasra

The mosques are all located in the town centre, other than the Iskele Mosque which is in the harbour area.

The **Burmalı Minare Mosque**, **Yörgüç Pasha Mosque**, **Mehmed Pasha Mosque** and the **Sultan Beyazıd Mosque** are among those found in the town of Amasra. Another is **Iskele Mosque** located right on the harbourside. If you like Turkish culture and you want your children to appreciate these buildings and their importance to the local people then visits to these fascinating mosques are well worth while.

Safranbolu ★★★

*Safranbolu Tourist Information Office, Kazdağilioğlu Meydani No 1, Safranbolu. +90 370 712 38 63; **www.safranbulu.gov.tr***

The city of Safranbolu is, in its entirety, a UNESCO World

Heritage site because of its outstanding architecture. There are dozens of beautifully preserved wooden Ottoman mansions, among them **Paşa House**, now used as a hotel, **Kaymakamler House** and **Asmazlar Havuzula Konak House**. Its **Cinci Han** (see p. 195) was once a commercial centre and is now a hotel, while there are mosques, Turkish baths and shopping streets to see. Safranbolu is considered so important because the architecture found in its streets even today was that used throughout the Ottoman Empire. If your children like history then they will adore Safranbolu.

Sümela Monastery, Trabzon ★★

Sümela Monastery, Trabzon. *+90 462 531 10 61.*

Located just 50km or so from Trabzon within the **Altindere National Park** and well signposted, the 14th-century Sümela Monastery is perched high on a sheer cliff face 270m above a deep gorge and overlooking the Altindere valley. It is a remarkable sight – almost ghostly. Your children will be as captivated as you. Its walls, inside and out, are painted with brilliant frescoes. There are the ruins of living quarters once used by the monks who lived there, a church and a library. You can venture inside and explore.

Open *8am–6pm daily, with reduced opening times during winter months.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL.*

The Zağnos Bridge and Tower, Trabzon ★

Zağnos Caddesi, Trabzon.

Although having something of a macabre history, the Zağnos Bridge and Tower in Trabzon is a pleasant enough stopping-off point if you are visiting this area of the Black Sea region with your family. Crossing over the Kuzgun ravine, the 15th-century Zağnos Bridge provides a great view of the area and was used in centuries past as an important crossing point for soldiers, while the tower was once an infamous prison. Today, there's a nice cafe offering timely refreshments.

Sümela Monastery, Trabzon

Trabzon Castle

Trabzon Castle, Trabzon. +90 462 326 07 48; www.trabzonkulturturizm.gov.tr (tourist information)

You can't miss Trabzon Castle – it is perched on top of a large flat-topped hill overlooking the town and although begging to be explored is, sadly, in a military zone. The remains are good to look at from a distance though, and reflect styles from Byzantine, Commagene and Ottoman periods. Your children will, for sure, be fascinated by the fantasy of an ancient castle.

The Top Museums

Amasra Museum ★

Amasra Museum, Atatürk Caddesi. Amasra. +90 358 218 69 57

The town of Amasra can trace its history back, it is believed, to the 6th century when it was founded by the Miletians. Over the years several important fortifications and religious buildings have stood around the town and the peninsula on which it stands. Today, there are the remains of a Byzantine castle and a couple of fortresses. Amasra's history is told in its archaeological museum, the Amasra Museum, with an extraordinary collection of artefacts on display covering almost all the town's history. Your children will be enchanted by the early examples of toys and cups.

***Open** 9am–5.30pm daily except Mon, with reduced opening times in winter. **Admission** 10 YTL.*

Archaeology Museum and Ethnography Museum, Kastamonu ★

The Archaeology Museum, Isfendiyarbey Mah. ,Cumhuriyet Caddesi No 6, Kastamonu. +90 366 214 54 56. The Ethnography Museum, Hepkebirier Mah., Sakarya Caddesi, Kastamonu. +90 366 214 01 49

Kastamonu's two main museums dedicated to finds from the local area, the Archaeology Museum and Ethnography Museum, are conveniently located in the centre of town and tell the story of the lives of people during largely Byzantine and Ottoman times. Displays of ceramics, coins, weapons and tools are on view. The shields, particularly, should interest your boys. Upstairs in the Ethnography Museum there's a good library.

***Open** 9am–5.30pm daily except Mon. **Admission** 10 YTL.*

Ethnographical Museum, Ordu ★ FIND

Ethnographical Museum in Selimiye Mah., Taşocak Caddesi +90 452 223 25 96

Housed in a mansion known as the Paşaoğlu Konak, the museum, through a series of exhibits, shows how a wealthy 19th-century resident of Ordu might have lived. There are household items and furniture, along with a few children's toys that will definitely interest your little ones.

***Open** 9am–5.30pm daily except Mon, with reduced opening times in winter. **Admission** 10 YTL.*

Haghia Sophia, Trabzon ★

Haghia Sophia, Trabzon. *+90 462 223 30 43.*

Housed in the Church of the Divine Wisdom, the Haghia Sophia, or Aya Sofya Museum as it is otherwise known, was built between 1238 and 1263. It is beautifully preserved with its walls decorated with frescos depicting themes from the Bible. Your children will enjoy the brightly coloured drawings. On display are ceramics, coins, paintings and artefacts from Trabzon's long history.

Open *8am–5.30pm daily except Mon, with reduced opening times in winter.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL.*

Liva Paşa Mansion Museum, Kastamonu

Liva Paşa Mansion Museum, Kastamonu. *+90 366 212 01 62.*

The small museum is housed in an interesting period property and contains ceramic pieces, glassware, coins, jewellery and other artefacts found on digs around the region. If your children are not keen on museums but you are, then a visit to this one will not take too much time out of your agenda.

Open *9am–5.30pm daily except Mon, with reduced opening times in winter.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL.*

Arts & Crafts

Devek is famous for its beautifully carved wood canes, which, if you are looking for something a little more unusual, could be ideal souvenirs or gifts The people of the village, located around 50km southeast of Zonguldak, have been making them for hundreds of years. **Trabzon** is equally famed for the handicraft skills of its residents. Made from natural materials available locally, the crafts found in Trabzon, one of the main copper mining centres of the Ottoman Empire, are beaten copper cauldrons, ewers, bowls and buckets, copper cutlery and jewellery, plus wooden furniture and textiles. The area has been weaving wool, linens and cashmere on looms for centuries. Similarly **Sinop** is known

Aya Sofya Museum, Trabzon

for its wooden carvings, although its people tend to focus on traditional nautical themes.

Shopping

All the larger towns and cities of the Black Sea region have shopping centres for more modern purchases, but for some really unusual souvenirs to take back home head for the bazaars. In the historic Safranbolu, for instance, be sure to visit the Arasta, the Old Bazaar, where you can watch craftsmen and women at work making basketware, jewellery and ceramics, among other crafts. Haggle for the best price. For some more unusual souvenirs try heading out to Devek for carved wooden canes, Trabzon for copper items or Sinop for nautical items.

For Active Families

Horse-riding in Kastamonu ★

VALUE

International Equestrian Tourism Centre, Daday. *+90 366 212 01 62.*

The area around Kastamonu in the heart of the Black Sea region is known for its sporting activities. Among them is horse riding at the International Equestrian Tourism Centre at Daday. The centre offers tuition and, depending on your level of riding expertise, escorted hacks in the surrounding countryside and forest. If you or your children are not comfortable to ride out in the open you can stay within the complex and ride in the ménage.

***Open** 10am–late daily. Lessons bookable. **Admission** free, lessons chargeable.*

Skiing, Cycling and Whitewater Rafting at Ilgaz National Park ★★

VALUE

Ilgaz National Park, Kastamonu. *+90 366 212 58 71.*

The Ilgaz National Park is a sprawling space of parkland and meadows, dense forest and mountains, streams and caves. You can ski on Ilgaz Mountain within the park (in winter), whitewater raft along its streams if you are brave or cycle around numerous country routes. Located just 60km south of Kastamonu, the park offers lots of opportunities to explore and a great family day out. The Kastamonu tourist information office (see p. 180) has leaflets on the up-to-date activities and timetables available.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

All prices quoted are for a double room in low season.

INEXPENSIVE

Demirkol Turkish Hotel ★★

VALUE

Bankalar Caddesi 16, Borçka, Artvin. *+90 466 415 36 60. Located in the centre of Artvin.*

The Demirkol Turkish Hotel is a small hotel of just 42 guestrooms, but its on-site amenities make it a good family base at a relatively low price. It is also in

the very heart of Artvin, close to the town's little **Georgian museum** and its main shopping streets. It offers a special menu in its traditionally decorated restaurant where Turkish dishes are predominantly served, as well as a good choice of ice creams and desserts. There's also a swimming pool for your children to enjoy themselves, along with a Turkish bath, sauna and solarium for older members of the family. The hotel is quick to offer information on local activities that will keep children entertained, although almost all revolve around the scenery and landscape for which the area is known. There's trekking, cycling and nature trails to explore, especially in the nearby **Karagöl National Park** (see p. 188) or watersports on some of the rivers that wind their way through Artvin.

Rooms *42, including family suites.* ***Rates*** *from around 90 YTL.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *restaurant with children's menu, playground, swimming pool, fitness suite, Turkish bath, sauna, high chairs available in the restaurant, laundry service.* ***In room*** *AC, TV, en-suite bathroom, cots and special children's beds available on request.*

MODERATE

Cinci Han Hotel ★★

*Esko Çarsi Çesme Cinci Han, Safranbolu +90 370 712 06 80; **www.cincihan.com**. Located in the very heart of the historic city of Safranbolu, near the bazaar.*

The Cinci Han building, a former *caravanserai* for passing merchants, dates back to a time when Safranbolu was an important trading city. Built in 1645, it was used for many years in this capacity before being transformed into the impressive hotel it is today. Affording lots of luxuries, the Cinci Han Hotel welcomes children and provides services such as a children's club, babysitting and a playground. In its **Develik Restaurant** there is a special children's menu serving smaller versions of the Turkish and international dishes offered on the main menu. The hotel is situated right near the bazaar in the centre of Safranbolu and, as such, is ideal for exploring the city without the need for too much walking. Similarly, it provides a good base if taking a hired car out for a drive to explore the plantations and orchards for which the Black Sea region is known. A guests' car park means your hire car will be safe. This is a hotel that feels welcoming and with a traditional Turkish décor, vaulted ceilings and massive fireplaces it has lots of character too.

Rooms *25, including family rooms.* ***Rates*** *from around 150 YTL with packages available for families.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *Children's club, playground, babysitting service, laundry service, restaurant, cafe, bar, free car parking.* ***In room*** *en-suite bathroom, central heating, TV, Internet, 24-hour room service.*

EXPENSIVE

Hotel Dedeman Rize ★★

*Alipaşa Köyü Mevkii, Rize +90 464 223 44 44; **www.dedemanhotels.com**. Located right on the seafront at the holiday resort of Rize.*

This large contemporary chain hotel, which is part of a chain, has 82 rooms with sea views. It is close to amenities such as its castle ruins, botanical gardens and playgrounds as well as being near to the road network for travelling further afield to places like Trabzon or the Sümela Monastery. It has the added bonus of a private beach a hop and a jump away from the entrance. The hotel is luxurious, with guestrooms affording what seems like every amenity, from a private bathroom to satellite television. In its two restaurants, the Roof Restaurant and the Ball Saloon, which each serve international cuisine with a hint of Turkish, there is a special children's menu offered. An indoor swimming pool will delight your children, while a fitness suite and solarium are ideal escapes for mum or dad.

Rooms *82, including family suites.* ***Rates*** *from around 500 YTL.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *two restaurants with children's menu, babysitting service, private beach, indoor swimming pool, fitness suite, solarium. Cots, children's beds and buggy hire.* ***In room*** *room service Internet, TV, AC.*

FAMILY-FRIENDLY DINING

INEXPENSIVE

Tad Pizza and Burger Restaurant ★★★

Belediye Karşisi, Trabzon *+90 462 321 12 38. Located in the centre of Trabzon, not far from the main government office and Town Hall.*

With a brightly coloured décor and a friendly team of staff, the Tad Pizza and Burger Restaurant is an easy, informal place to dine with a family. There are lots of different toppings for the pizzas, including the staple anchovy, so your little ones should find something that suits even the fussiest of tastes, while the burgers are the usual beef and chicken with a few variations like a Turkish burger. This is a centrally located, convenient and well-priced eatery, with the type of menu that will appeal to youngsters.

Open *12pm–11pm.* ***Main Courses*** *10 YTL plus a bit extra for soft drinks, coffee and desserts.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *high chairs and buggy storage space.*

MODERATE

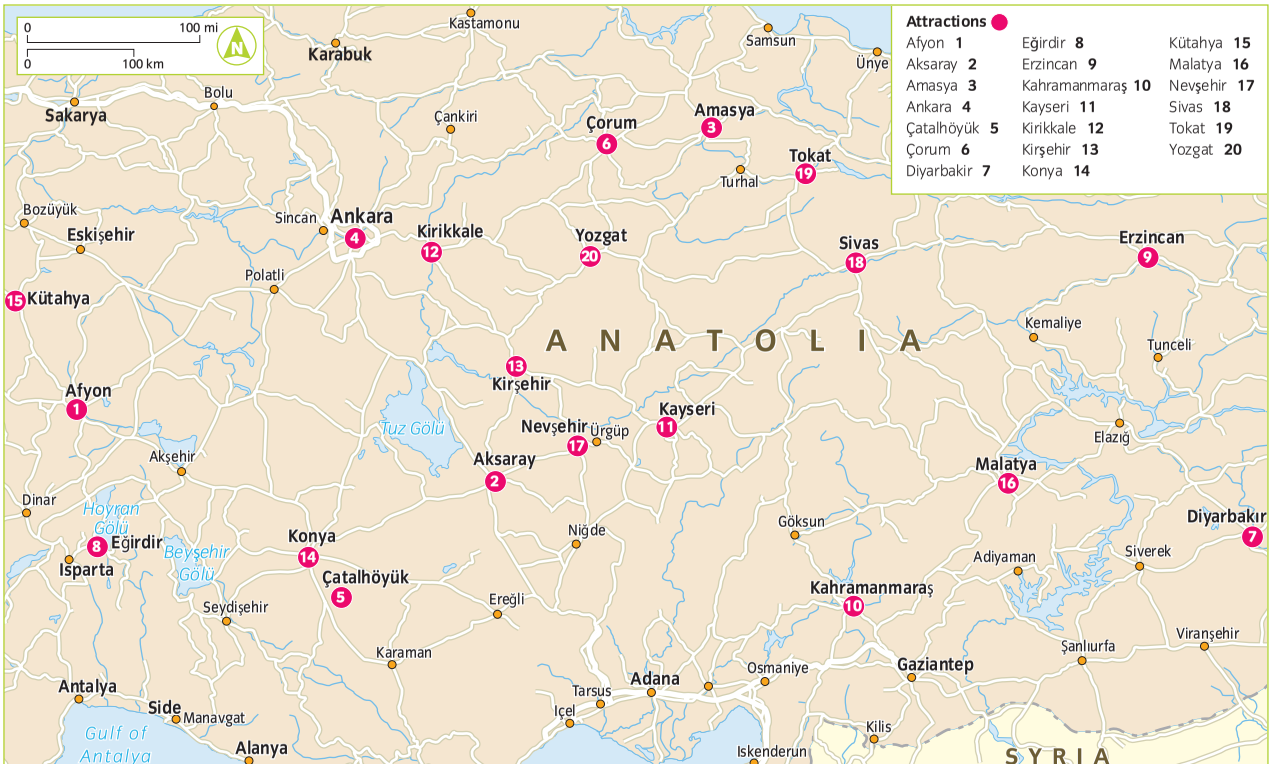
Kadioğlu Sehzade Sofrasi ★★

Çeşme Mah., Arasta Sok 8, Safranbolu *+90 370 712 50 91. Located in the centre of this historic town, right near the old bazaar.*

The Kadioğlu Şehzade Sofrasi is one of Safranbolu's best restaurants with a good choice of light snacks, vegetarian options and à la carte meals. The mainstay of its menu is grills, cooked well with herbs and spices. Also on the menu are traditional dishes such as anchovy in *börek* (filo pastry) and stews like the popular *Levrek pilakisi* made of fish and potatoes with spices. Both are likely to be served with types of local bread, like pide, a flat bread, or *ekmek*, which resembles a loaf.

Open *12pm–11pm.* ***Main Courses*** *25 YTL, extra if partaking of a glass or two of wine.* ***Credit*** *MC, V.* ***Amenities*** *children's selection, high chairs and buggy storage space.*

8 Ankara & the Anatolia Region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Attractions
Afyon 1
Aksaray 2
Amasya 3
Ankara 4
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Çorum 6
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Sivas 18
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Kastamonu
Karabuk
Samsun
Ünye
Bolu
Sakarya
Çankiri
Çorum
Amasya
Tokat
Turhal
Bozüyük
Eskişehir
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Kayseri
Elazığ
Akşehir
Aksaray
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Hoyran Gölü
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Diyarbakır
Eğirdir
Beyşehir Gölü
Konya
Niğde
Adiyaman
Siverek
Isparta
Çatalhöyük
Kahramanmaraş
Seydişehir
Ereğli
Viranşehir
Karaman
Şanlıurfa
Osmaniye
Gaziantep
Antalya
Side
Manavgat
Tarsus
Adana
İçel
Kilis
Gulf of Antalya
Alanya
Iskenderun
SYRIA

The modern, cosmopolitan city of Ankara is the capital of Turkey and the centre of the country's political life. It lies, pretty much, in the heart of the country, geographically speaking. Its location is also fairly central in the Anatolia region. This region tends to be divided into **Central Anatolia** and **Southeastern Anatolia** for convenience, and is absolutely vast. In fact, Anatolia is larger than all the other regions of Turkey put together. It is famous for its vast plateaux, forests, massively high mountains, inland lakes and, of course, Ankara, as well as the most unusual rock formations on earth in Cappadocia, known as 'Fairy Chimneys'.

Ankara has an old quarter dating back centuries, but is essentially a modern city. In terms of bringing your children here, the city offers many educational opportunities, such as the outstanding **Anitkabir Mausoleum**, or the Atatürk Mausoleum, and the **Museum of Anatolian Civilizations**. While the city doesn't have a large number of attractions for children like theme parks or long stretches of beach that characterise the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, it does give them the chance to play in a dozen or so extremely lush parks and visit attractions like the **Atatürk Forest Farm and Zoo** as well as spend time at an **aquapark**, **ice-skating rink** or a **toy museum**.

Anatolia, in contrast to Ankara, has only the sense of hustle and bustle in a handful of cities dotted about this vast expanse of landscape. You can travel for hours without seeing a town, and only an occasional village. There are many national parks and if your family is drawn by walks, mountain pursuits and nature then a holiday in the Anatolia region may suit you, but if your children are the restless type then you may wish to visit another part of Turkey with more child-orientated attractions.

Other towns and cities to see in the Anatolia region are **Çankara, Eskisehir**, **Kayseri, Kirsehir**, **Konya**, **Nevsehir**, **Nigde**, **Sivas**, **Yozgat**, **Aksaray**, **Karaman** and **Kirikkale**. Not all are what could be described as tourist areas, and may not have hotels suitable for families, so if exploring central Turkey for, perhaps, a nature trail or walking holiday, a skiing break or camping, then be sure to check ahead. This region is huge and you will want to know that refreshment facilities and a warm bed are waiting for you at the end of your journey, especially if travelling with very young children.

ESSENTIALS

Getting There

By Plane Most visitors to Ankara and the Anatolia region will arrive at Ankara's airport, the **Ankara International Esenboğa Airport** (*+90 212 465 5555*; ***www.ataturkairport.com***), and make their way by car or public transport to their destination. Visitors to Cappadocia, the main tourist area of the Anatolia

region, will arrive via Istanbul or Izmir. Daily flights from Istanbul fly to **Kayseri's Erkilet Airport**. The main airlines that operate the route are **Turkish Airlines** (*www.thy.com*), **Onur Air** and **Pegasus Airlines** (*www.pegasusairlines.com*). From **Izmir**, there are three flights a week operated by **Sun Express** (*+90 232 444 07 97*; *www.sunexpress.com.tr*), to **Nevsehir Airport**, which is around 30 minutes or so from Ürgüp in the heart of Cappadocia. Several other airports are dotted around the area, such as at **Konya** and **Isparta**, with regular flights from Istanbul.

By Road and Rail As the Anatolia region is so vast your best bet is to arrive by air; however, Ankara and Istanbul are also linked by long-distance bus and train services. The main highway from Istanbul to Ankara is a six-lane toll road, with dual-lane link roads that go from this main artery to other towns and cities. The three largest bus companies are **Ulusoy, Kâmil Koç and Varan** (see p. 35 (Chapter 2)), while train services are operated by the **Turkish State Railway (TCDD.** *www.tcdd.gov.tr).*

VISITOR INFORMATION

Tourist Information Offices

Ankara and the Anatolia region are well served by the tourist information network and as such there are offices dotted throughout this part of the country. Knowledgeable and helpful, the staff will always try to help with a query. They generally have a good selection of leaflets and maps that not only give you information but up-to-date opening hours and directions. Contact the information office closest to where you are staying.

Adiyaman
Atatürk Boulevard No 84, Adiyaman, *+90 416 216 12 59*

Aksaray
Taşpazar Mah., Kadioğlu Sok., No 1, Aksaray *+90 382 212 46 88*

Amasya
Pirinççi Mah., Atatürk Caddesi No. 39, Amasya *+90 358 218 50 02*

Ankara
Esenboğa Airport, Ankara *+90 312 398 03 48*.
Gazi Mustafa Kemal Boulevard No 121, Ankara *+90 312 231 55 72*.
Anafartalar Caddesi No 67, Ankara *+90 312 310 04 02*.
Atatürk Boulevard No 29, Opera, Ankara *+90 312 309 08 50*.
Ismet Inönü Bulvari No 5, Emek, Ankara *+90 312 212 83 00*.

Avanos
Atatürk Caddesi, Avanos *+90 384 511 43 60*.

Çankiri
Atatürk Boulevard No 100, Yil Kültür Merkezi, Çankiri *+90 376 213 40 47*.

Çorum
Gazi Caddesi, Yeni Hükümet Binasi, C Blok Kat 8, Çorum *+90 364 213 47 04*; ***www.corumkulturturizm.gov.tr***

Diyarbakir
Vilayet Caddesi, Kültür Sarayi Kat 6, Diyarbakir *+90 412 221 78 40*.
Dağkapi Burcu Giriş Bölümü, Diyarbakir *+90 412 228 17 06*.

Eskişehir
Valilik Binasi Kat 1, Eskişehir *+90 222 230 68 40*.

Gazi Antep
100 Yil Atatürk Kültür Parki Içi, Vilayet Arkasi, Gazi Antep *+90 342 220 13 08*; ***www.gaziantep.gov.tr***

Güzelyurt
Kaymakamlik Binasi Kat 1, Güzelyurt *+90 382 451 21 49*.

Hacibektaş
Hacibektaş Kültür Merkezi Içi, Hacibektaş *+90 384 441 36 87*.

Kahraman Maraş
GMK Bulvari, Atatürk Parki Sabanci Kültür Merkezi, Kahraman Maraş *+90 344 235 15 02*.

Kahta
Hükümet Binasi, Mustafa Kemal Caddesi, Kahta *+90 416 725 50 07*.

Karaman
Ziya Gökalp Mah., Il Halk Kütüphane Binasi 70200, Karaman *+90 338 213 01 92*.

Kayseri
Seyit Gazi Mah., Ahmet Yesevi Caddesi No 136, Melikgazi, Kayseri *+90 352 231 04 31*.
Kaşni Pazari, Zeynel Abidin Türbesi Yani, Melikgazi, Kayseri *+90 352 222 39 03*.

Kilis
Neşet Efendi Konaği, Topaloğlu Sok No 2, Kilis *+90 348 814 09 96*; ***www.kiliskulturturizm.gov.tr***

Kirikkale
Fabrikalar Mah., Fevri Çakmak Caddesi, Valilik Yani, Kirikkale. *+90 318 224 26 84*.

Kirşehir
Ahi Evran Mah., Kültür Sitesi No 10, Kirşehir *+90 386 213 44 43*.

Konya
Mevlana Caddesi No 65 Karatay, Konya *+90 332 353 40 20*.

Mardin
Hükümet Konaği Kat 2, Mardin *+90 482 212 37 76*.

Nevşehir
Atatürk Boulevard, Hastane Önü, Nevşehir *+90 384 213 42 60*.

Şanli Urfa
Atatürk Boulevard, Vilayet Binasi Kat 3, Şanli Urfa *+90 414 312 53 32*.

Siirt
Özbel Işhani Kat 5, Siirt *+90 484 223 57 90*.

Şirnak
Ismet Paşa Mah., Hükümet Konaği, Şirnak *+90 486 216 20 89*; ***www.sirnakkultur.gov.tr***

Sivas
Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, Sivas *+90 346 221 28 50*.

Tokat
Valilik Binasi Kat 3, Tokat *+90 356 214 85 67*.

Ürgüp
Park Içi, Ürgüp *+90 384 341 40 59*.

Yozgat
Medrese Mah., Kültür Sok, Kültür Merkezi Binasi Kat 4, Yozgat *+90 354 212 64 23*.

Useful websites for tourists

www.gototurkey.co.uk

www.tourismturkey.org

www.kulturturizm.gov.tr

Orientation

Ankara lies just west of the centre of the country, while the Anatolia region stretches from the boundaries of the Marmara region to the northwest, the Aegean to the west, the Mediterranean to the south and the Black Sea region to the north. Anatolia is landlocked, with several inland lakes. The largest are **Lake Van** and **Salt Lake**. To the east and southeast, it borders the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Syria and Iraq. The region's major towns and cities include **Ankara**, of course, as well as **Kirikkale**, **Kayseri**, **Sivas**, **Aksaray** and **Diyarbakir**.

Getting Around

Ankara itself has a modern road and highway infrastructure so getting around is relatively straightforward. All the districts and main sights of the city are clearly signposted. As for getting around the rest of the Anatolia region, because of its huge size you will probably take **domestic flights** or **intercity buses**, although whether the latter will be appropriate for you if you have very young children is a decision that needs to be made. Such a journey could be tiring, of course. **Fast trains** serve some of the region from Ankara or Istanbul, although not all, as much of the terrain is mountainous. For up-to-date route information and timetables contact the **Turkish State Railway (TCDD**. ***www.tcdd.gov.tr***). As regards getting around in towns and villages, the **bus network** is generally well developed, although less so in rural areas. Roads are, on the whole, good, although again rural roads can be a bit tricky so care is needed to avoid an accident.

PLANNING YOUR OUTINGS

Ankara and the larger towns of the Anatolia region have public toilets to freshen up and establishments to get a meal and a drink. Most restaurants have good facilities, including baby-changing areas. However, rural areas may not offer such conveniences and you will need to pack everything you and your family may need for a day out, such as snacks, sweets for energy, drinks, especially water, a change of clothes and nappies and wipes. It is also a good idea to take along games and toys to keep your little ones amused on journeys,

and if you are planning to be out in the sunshine do take plenty of sun cream as it can be fearsome in the summer months. Always take good maps from the tourist information office nearest to where you are staying and a mobile phone in case you need assistance, especially if heading off into the countryside to explore. Mobile phones generally work fine throughout Turkey.

FAST FACTS

Medical Emergencies
Emergency *112*

Money Exchange All the main towns and cities in the Anatolia region and in Ankara itself have money exchange centres, although you should find most banks and hotels will exchange money for you too. The centres tend to observe standard opening times, from around 9am in the morning through to 1pm.

Toilets You are likely to find few toilet facilities if venturing in the rural areas of the Anatolia region as, like the rest of Turkey, they tend to be provided in the centre of the larger towns only. Ankara has many facilities, especially in its shopping centres and parks. Apart from in Ankara, they are not always modern and sometimes may even be a hole in the ground, although the facilities on the highways tend to be more up-to-date. It is always advisable to use the facilities of restaurants or picnic areas when you stop for refreshments. *Bay* is for men, *Bayan* for women. Always carry some toilet paper with you as it is not always provided.

WHAT TO SEE & DO

Children's Top 10 Attractions

1. **Climbing** into a basket and being lifted up over Cappadocia to see the rock formations from a hot air balloon. See p. 220
2. **Seeing** the 'Fairy Chimneys' at Cappadocia and wondering how rocks could ever form such a weird shape. See p. 209
3. **Splashing** in the waters of Ankara's Aquapark and heading off to enjoy a whitewater raft experience. See p. 211
4. **Hearing** your voice echo back to you in one of the tunnels of the underground city of Derinkuyu. See p. 215
5. **Taking** a tour of the gardens at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara and discovering statues and pots at every turn. See p. 219
6. **Laughing** as you have a go at ten-pin bowling at Bilikent Rollhouse, Ankara. See p. 220
7. **Cycling** in the Soğanli Valley and finding one of its little craft shops to buy a local handmade cloth doll. See p. 210
8. **Learning** about the habitats of animals and birds in the special environmental section of the

Atatürk Farm and Zoo in Ankara. See p. 212

9 **Studying** the vintage steam trains in the open-air Steam Locomotive Museum in Ankara and hoping for a ride. See p. 217

10 **Skating** on the Olympic-size ice rink at Belpa and trying not to fall over. See p. 221

Child-friendly Events & Entertainment

Avanos Art and Tourism Festival ★ ALL AGES

Every August, the town of Avanos hosts its Avanos Art and Tourism Festival, which attracts locals as well as tourists. The town is known for its handicrafts and at this time, stalls of locally thrown pottery combine with those displaying woven rugs and items like jewellery. The festival atmosphere is further created by special music and traditional dancing events, art shows, food stalls and craft demonstrations. Check with tourist information (see p. 200) for further information on the festival together with a programme of planned events.

August. Avanos.

Children's Theatre Festival, Ankara ★★ FIND ALL AGES

This is generally a four-day event held every year in May at various venues around the city, including Keçiören. Puppetry, workshops and plays designed and created especially for children form a full and varied programme. Check with tourist information (see p. 200) for the programme of events and venues, which can change every year.

May. Various venues throughout Ankara.

International Children's Day ★★★ ALL AGES

Every year on 23rd April Ankara, along with other towns throughout the region, hosts festivals, fetes, exhibitions and concerts that are designed exclusively for children to mark International Children's Day. Special events include Ankara's Altindağ district's Municipal Cultural Centre's family event for disabled children. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, declared 23rd April a day especially for children. It is recognised by UNICEF and is now a national holiday and observed by other countries around the world (albeit on 1st June in other countries). Contact the nearest tourist information office (see p. 200) to where you are staying to find out what events are planned in your holiday town or city.

23rd April. Locations throughout the region.

Mevlana Week ★★ ALL AGES

If you're visiting Konya during December be sure to take part in the Mevlana Week celebrations at the lodge and museum dedicated to Mevlana. A series of musical events and dance performances make this a great family time out. Mevlana Week is held to celebrate the life of Mevlana, the 13th-century founder of the Mevlana

dervish sect, better known as the **Whirling Dervishes** because of their unusual dance routine. The dance is performed during the week-long event. The **Dervish Lodge** and a fascinating museum, the **Mevlana Museum**, are open to the public (see p. 217).

December. Mevlana Museum, Selimiye Caddesi, Konya. +90 332 351 12 15.

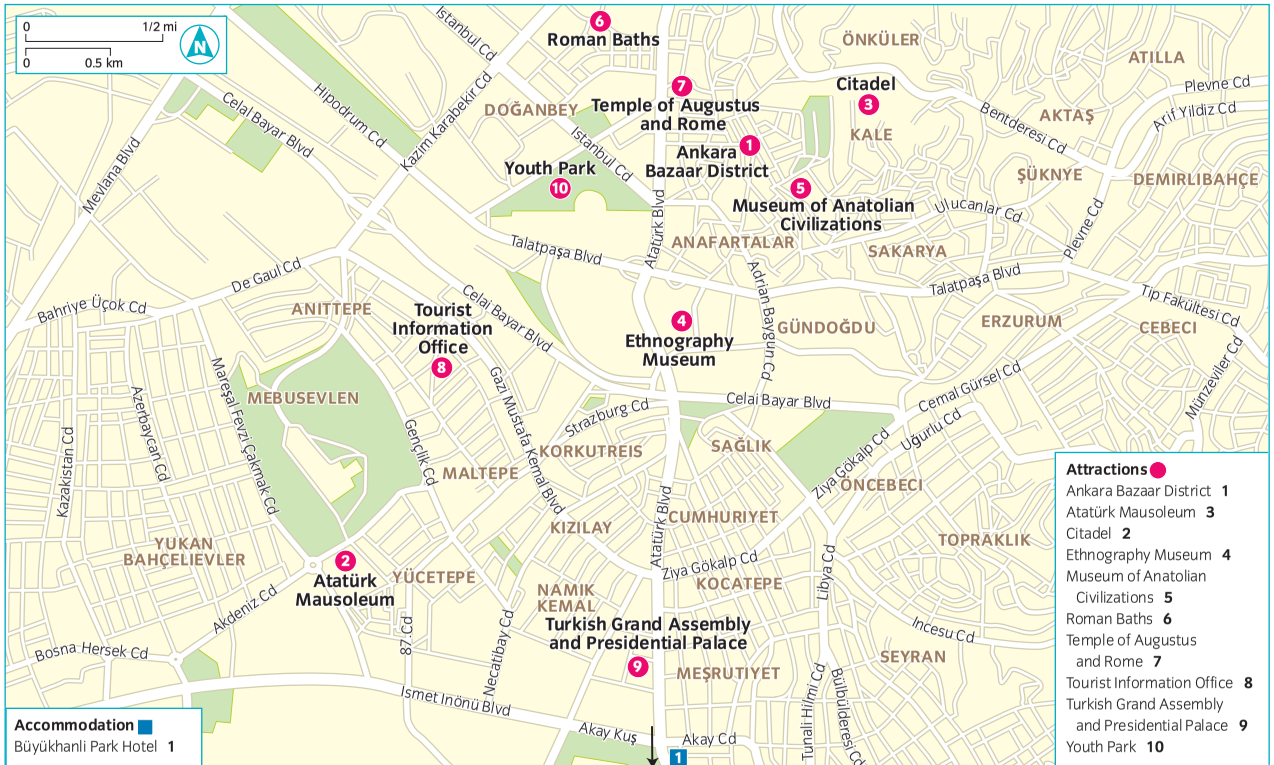
Main Tourist Areas

Ankara

Ankara lies on the site of what is believed to have been a Bronze Age settlement and later an ancient Hittite city, known as Ancrya. In Roman and Ottoman times it was an important trading centre, but it was only in the 1920s that it became the capital of the country. Atatürk, on founding the Republic of Turkey, decided Ankara afforded the best strategic location for governing the country, and made it the capital. He instigated a programme to transform the city into a thoroughly modern political and commercial centre of the country. His plans included modern buildings, palaces, a state-of-the-art road infrastructure, vast parkland areas and smart boulevards. He also founded a number of museums. Today, among the best for children are the outstanding **Museum of Anatolian Civilizations** (see p. 219), which is fascinating, although maybe more suited to older children. There's also the **Atatürk Farm and Zoo** where children can see and play with the animals (see p. 212), the **Ankara Üniversietsi Toy Museum** which has a lovely collection of toys spanning many decades (see p. 216), and the **Ethnography Museum** where visitors can see Turkish handicrafts and costumes (see p. 217). Ankara has a number of parks that are ideal for families too, such as the **Youth Park**, or **Gençlik Parkı**, and **Altinpark** (see p. 211, p. 212) and some fascinating mosques, its Roman baths and statues to see.

Cappadocia

Cappadocia is a region in central Anatolia that has one of the most extraordinary landscapes imaginable. Known as the 'Fairy Chimneys' (see p. 209), the huge rock formations cover a massive area. According to research, they were created millions of years ago when the volcanoes of Erciyes, Göllüdağ and Hasandaği erupted. The resulting layers of lava and soft tufa, which were said to be some 100m thick in places, have been worn away by the elements to create tall rock formations, many the shape of high mushrooms. The scale in terms of height and land cover of the rock formations is astonishing. Cappadocia, which comprises the towns and villages of **Ürgüp**, **Göreme**, **Derinkuyu**, **Avanos**, **Ihlara**, **Kaymakli** and **Üçhisar**, and takes in the valleys of **Pancarlik**, **Keşlik**, **Devrent** and **Soğanli**, also has numerous underground cities that once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Temple of Augustus and Rome
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Youth Park
Museum of Anatolian Civilizations
Ethnography Museum
Tourist Information Office
Atatürk Mausoleum
Turkish Grand Assembly and Presidential Palace
ÖNKÜLER
ATILLA
AKTAŞ
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DEMIRLIBAHÇE
DOĞANBEY
ANAFARTALAR
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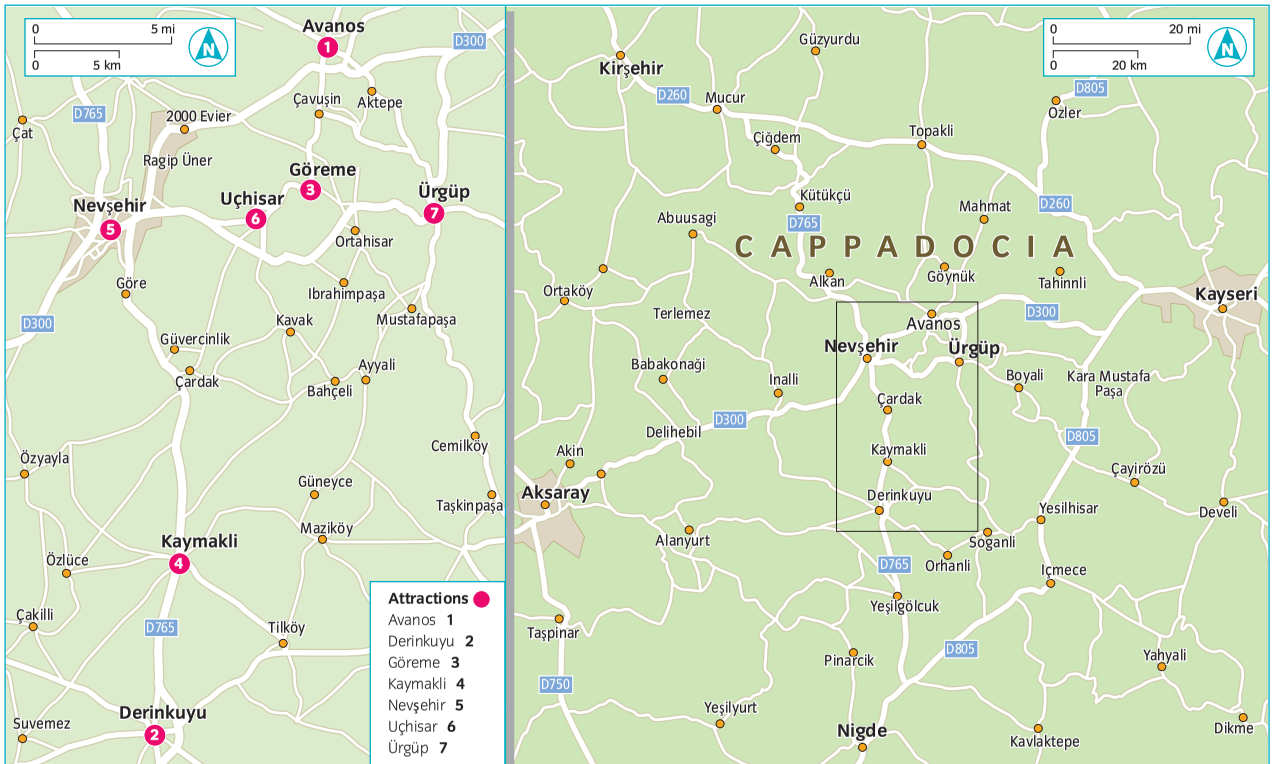
ERZURUM
CEBECI
ANITTEPE
MEBUSEVLEN
MALTEPE
KORKUTREIS
SAĞLIK
ÖNCEBECI
CUMHURIYET
KIZILAY
TOPRAKLIK
YUKAN BAHÇELIEVLER
YÜCETEPE
NAMIK KEMAL
KOCATEPE
MEŞRUTIYET
SEYRAN
İstanbul Cd
Hipodrum Cd
Kazım Karabekir Cd
Celal Bayar Blvd
Mevlana Blvd
Talatpaşa Blvd
Atatürk Blvd
Adrian Baygun Cd
Ulucanlar Cd
Plevne Cd
Bentderesi Cd
Arif Yildiz Cd
Tip Fakültesi Cd
Münzeviler Cd
De Gaul Cd
Bahriye Üçok Cd
Gazi Mustafa Kemal Blvd
Strazburg Cd
Cemal Gürsel Cd
Uğurlu Cd
Ziya Gökalp Cd
Gençlik Cd
Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak Cd
Azerbaycan Cd
Kazakistan Cd
Akdeniz Cd
Bosna Hersek Cd
87. Cd
Necatibay Cd
İsmet Inönü Blvd
Akay Kuş
Akay Cd
Libya Cd
Tunali Hilmi Cd
Büyükdere Cd
Incesu Cd
Accommodation
Büyükhanli Park Hotel 1
Attractions
Ankara Bazaar District 1
Atatürk Mausoleum 3
Citadel 2
Ethnography Museum 4
Museum of Anatolian Civilizations 5
Roman Baths 6
Temple of Augustus and Rome 7
Tourist Information Office 8
Turkish Grand Assembly and Presidential Palace 9
Youth Park 10

Houses in the rocks, Göreme

housed thousands of people when it was a refuge for early Christians who were being persecuted. There are also said to be around 3,000 churches and chapels carved in the rock. The **Göreme Open Air Museum** (see p. 218), is where most visitors head for, as it has been created to tell the story of the region. Cappadocia is reached by flights from Istanbul and Izmir (see 'Getting There', p. 199), and most visitors stay at least overnight to really appreciate the area to the fullest. There are hotels and restaurants in Göreme and Ürgüp particularly, which are good for families. Some are even carved in the rock (see p. 223). Your children will love it.

Konya

Konya has been an important city for centuries. Indeed there is evidence from the Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Hittite, Phrygian, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine eras. In the 12th century, during the Selçuk period, it was the capital city and some of its elegant buildings date from these times. It was also the home of Mevlana, who is mentioned frequently in history books as being a great Turkish philosopher. It was he who founded the Mevlana sect and created the dance performed by the Whirling Dervishes for which Turkey is famous. Mevlana is buried in the **Green Tomb** (Yesil Turbe) at the Dervishes Lodge in Konya. With its bright green tiled roof, it is the town's most famous building. You can see it above the rooftops. Today, you can visit the lodge and a **museum** that tells their story (see p. 217), along with attending the celebratory festival known as **Mevlana Week** (see p. 204) if you are visiting in December. While in Konya you can also visit its **Alaeddin Mosque**, (see p. 216) which dominates the skyline, the remains of the **Seljuk Imperial Palace** and an interesting little **museum** with exhibits of Seljuk pots and ceramics. A short drive from Konya is **Beysehir**, home of the impressive 13th-century **Eşrefoglu Mosque**, which is considered one of the finest examples of timber architectural structures of the Selçuk period in Turkey, and Beysehir Lake (see p. 209).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Avanos
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D300
Çavuşin
Aktepe
D765
Çat
2000 Evler
Ragıp Üner
Göreme
3
Uçhisar
6
Ürgüp
7
Nevşehir
5
Ortahisar
Göre
İbrahimpaşa
D300
Kavak
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Güvercinlik
Ayyali
Çardak
Bahçeli
Cemilköy
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Güneyce
Taşkınpaşa
Maziköy
Kaymakli
4
Özlüce
Çakilli
D765
Tilköy
Suvemez
Derinkuyu
2
Attractions
Avanos 1
Derinkuyu 2
Göreme 3
Kaymakli 4
Nevşehir 5
Uçhisar 6
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CAPPADOCIA
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Taşpinar
D805
Pinarcik
Yahyali
D750
Yeşilyurt
Nigde
Kavlaktepe
Dikme

Natural Wonders & Spectacular Views

Beysehir Lake ★★

Located 75km west of Konya.

Beysehir Lake is a massive freshwater lake surrounded by beautiful countryside. This area is affectionately known as Turkey's Lake District, with Beysehir Lake being the third largest of the main lakes. Others include **Lake Eber**, **Lake Aksehir** and **Lake Egirdir**. The area is known for its good fishing, nature trails and walking routes, plus its spectacular views. Nearby is the 13th-century **Eşrefoglu Mosque**, which is considered one of the finest examples of timber architectural structures in Turkey.

Cappadocia ★★★ VALUE

One of the best ways to see the landscape of the Cappadocia region is to take a hot air balloon. Its scale is awesome. Mile after mile of rock formations have been created over time from volcanic lava mixed with ash and mud that has eroded (see '**The Göreme Open Air Museum** and **Göreme National Park**', p. 218) to form what is affectionately known as the 'Fairy Chimneys'. There are cities, churches, chapels and dwellings dating from Neolithic times carved both in the rock face and underground. The region is vast. It takes in the village of **Göreme** itself, where many villages still live in cave homes, as well as **Derinkuyu**, site of one of the largest underground cities. Cappadocia is on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Elmsdağ Mountains ★

Located just over 20km due east of Ankara towards Eskisehir.

The Elmsdağ Mountains offer a dramatic addition to the landscape with some amazing scenic drives out, especially in the foothills, and along the way are little cafes for you to stop awhile

Beysehir Lake

to refresh. There are picnic areas too if you are planning a family day out. In the colder months the mountains are topped with snow.

GAP Project, Southwestern Anatolia

Located 24km northwest to Bozova of Şanlıurfa Province on the state road D875 to Adıyaman.

If you're exploring the southwestern Anatolia region of Turkey then you will almost inevitably come across the massive **Atatürk Dam** at some point. It is the foremost such structure in Turkey and one of the largest in the world. A key part of a project known as GAP, which is redeveloping vast areas of the region, the dam lies at the centre of a large network of waterways. As well as providing essential day-to-day amenities for residents, such as electricity, it is generating sporting activities like sailing, windsurfing and other watersports. The **Atatürk Reservoir** can usually be seen with these types of activities taking place, and schools are springing up around its perimeter. The GAP project encompasses the River Firat and the River Dicle and their valleys, and towns and provinces including Diyarbakir, Siirt and Urfga, among others.

Kapuzbaşi Waterfall

Located 175km south of the Kayseri.

If you're spending a bit of time in **Kayseri**, perhaps making it your base as you explore the Cappadocia region, then you might like to follow the signs for the Kapuzbaşi Waterfall. It's about 175km or so south of the Kayseri, so allow a couple of hours to get there and be sure to take plenty of snacks, drinks and games for your little ones. The journey is worth it though, as there are seven different springs on top of a high mountain that fall in a cascade of brilliant water. Nearby is a **carpet-weaving centre**, so you could combine the two on a journey. Your youngsters will love the opportunity to add a stitch of their own in a carpet and then wonder where it will end up. The area is famous for its carpets and they tend to feature floral patterns.

Mount Ararat, Doğubeyazit ★

Said to be the resting place of Noah's Ark when the biblical flood waters subsided, Mount Ararat, or Ağri Dağı as it is known, is a massive extinct volcano that rises alarmingly above the plains of central to eastern Turkey. It can be seen clearly from the town of **Doğubeyazit** and, at nearly 5200m high, is the country's highest peak. Not far from the Doğubeyazit and within sight of Mount Ararat is the 18th-century **Palace of Ishak Paşa Sarayi**. Looking rather like a fortress, it was built in an Ottoman style.

Soğanli Valley ★

Located near the Cappadocia region town of Ürgüp.

The Soğanli Valley has excellent walking and nature trail opportunities for visitors, and if your children like this type of outdoor

activity then a visit could be on your agenda. There are many well-preserved old churches to see, almost all with vividly coloured wall paintings. This area has a thriving crafts industry, and your little ones will have the opportunity to buy one of the townsfolk's handmade cloth dolls that can be seen everywhere in this part of Turkey.

Soğuksu National Park ★ FIND

Located a few kilometres north of Ankara off the Istanbul Highway.

Soğuksu National Park is a sprawling area of parkland, forest and picnic areas. It is great for trekking trips, following nature trails, cycling and spending relaxing days with the family in a natural environment. It has a particularly good hiking trail that takes in some of the most dramatic areas of the park. The trail is well signposted. Of course, hiking may not be suitable if your family is especially young. Within the park is the Kizilcahamam, a spa resort that has developed because of the park's natural hot mineral springs. The park is relatively straightforward to find, a few kilometres north of Ankara off the Istanbul Highway. The Çamkoru Forest is a little farther on along the highway.

Nature Reserves, Parks & Gardens

Altinpark ★★ GREEN VALUE

Altınpark (The Golden Park), Aydınlıkevler. +90 312 317 96 96, Located 5km from Ulus and signposted off the highway to Esenboğa Airport.

This is a city centre park with a difference. Your youngsters can have a spot of educational activity in the science museum designed specifically to appeal to children, and then head off to the playground areas and fairground to unwind – and all within the boundaries of the park. It scores highly by offering things to do for all ages too. For instance, you'll find there's an enormous playground with swings and slides for smaller tots, lakes with boating and watersports for the older ones and horse-riding with horses for all ages. Altinpark has extra wide pavements that wind and swirl around its play areas, which are designed so that toddlers on tricycles and older children on bikes can navigate easily without causing an obstruction. There are picnics, ponds and lots of places to get a snack and refresh. Altinpark is easy to find.

***Open** 8am until late daily. **Admission** free.*

Aquapark Club Watercity, Ankara ★ VALUE

*Haymanayolu 6 km, Gölbaşi, Ankara. + 90 312 498 21 00; **www.clubwatercity.com** (Turkish only)*

Offering lots of fun and the chance to splash in the wave pools, enjoy water and rafting slides and swim in its swimming pools that include an Olympic-sized one for the older children, a toddlers' pool and an indoor

pool, the Aquapark Club Watercity in Gölbaşi, Ankara makes a great day out for the family. It has restaurants and cafes with dishes on the menu that are ideal for children. Located just 10 minutes or so outside the city centre, it also offers tennis courts and a soccer pitch.

Open *9am–7pm daily.* ***Admission*** *40 YTL adults, 25 YTL ages 3–9, under 3s free.*

Atatürk Orman Çiftliği (Atatürk Forest Farm and Zoo) ★ GREEN VALUE

Atatürk Orman Çiftliği, Atatürk Forest Farm and Zoo, Ankara. *+90 312 211 01 70.*

Located on the outskirts of Ankara, the farm and zoo has acres of special environmentally controlled animal enclosures, parkland, agricultural areas, greenhouses, picnic areas and orchards to explore. Its zoo contains many species of animals, including giraffes, monkeys, elephants, zebras and lions, giving your youngsters the chance to see how they live up close. It is, in fact, the largest zoo in Turkey, covering some 25,000 acres. There's a farm that sells fruit, vegetables and the great ice cream and yoghurt made on site, along with a brewery that makes old-fashioned style beer, which might interest the older lads in your party – they can even buy a few bottles to take away with them. A dairy, fruit juice factory and a winery are on site too. As its name suggests, the farm and zoo was created on the orders of Atatürk who wanted to create green areas, protect animals, promote agriculture and locally produced food and offer a place for children to learn as well as relax. Within the grounds is an exact replica of **Atatürk's childhood home**.

Open *9am–5pm daily, closed Mon.* ***Admission*** *free.*

Mikasonmiya Ani Bahçesi

Kalehöyük, Kirşehir.

Containing one of the finest collections of trees in Turkey, the Mikasonmiya Ani Bahçesi is a massive park. There are said to be around 16,500 trees planted here. While there are few amenities as such, there are wonderful country walks and picnic areas. You may also happen on evidence of an ancient site. The area is located at what is believed to be the centre of the Hittite settlements in ancient times, and is still being excavated to this day.

Youth Park, Gençlik Parkı, Ankara ★★ VALUE

Youth Park, Gençlik Parkı, Ankara.

A big sprawl of parkland, grass areas and flower and shrub beds that all sit neatly around a huge artificial lake, Youth Park, Gençlik Parkı, central Ankara, is one of the most popular places to relax and unwind with residents and visitors to the city. Families with laughing children are a regular sight. Not only can you try your hand at **boating** on the lake, but in Youth Park you can play a spot of **tennis**, have a swim in its **swimming pool**, **cycle**, picnic or play **badminton**. You can also

have great fun in the **Luna Park** where rides for both children and adults make it popular with families. It might be a bit of a cliché to say there's something for everyone, but at the Youth Park it's actually true. When you and your little ones are exhausted after all the activity you can then stop awhile at one of the cafes and eat al fresco style while watching the world go by.

Open *8am–late daily.* ***Admission*** *free.*

Historic Buildings & Monuments

Ankara Citadel and the Old Quarter ★★ VALUE

The ancient walls of the citadel that now circle only part of the city of Ankara date back to the time of the Galatians. The Romans, Byzantines and the Selijuks made the walls longer and thicker. Today, they are remarkably well preserved given their age. Inside the walls is the oldest part of Ankara – a maze of narrow alleyways and streets containing mainly wooden houses, the oldest buildings in the city. There are shops selling everything from carpets to goodies more usually found at a car boot sale. If you and your children like quaint old architecture and love the buzz of tiny streets then head this way. You'll pass by the bazaars and marketplace areas of Ankara too, so you can haggle for a bargain to take home en route.

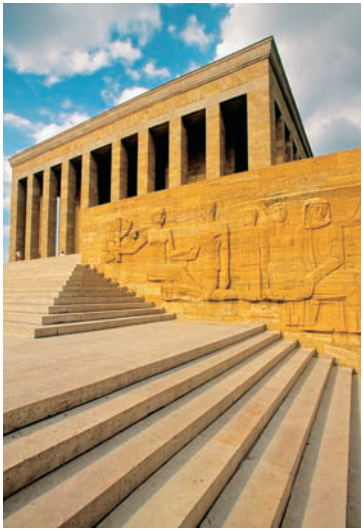
Atatürk Mausoleum

Atatürk Mausoleum, Anittepe Hill, Ankara.

Dominating the modern Anittepe area of Ankara, the Atatürk Mausoleum stands on the top of a hill and is the site of Atatürk's tomb. It was built over several years and completed in 1953 to a modern design with hints of traditional Turkish architecture. If your children are keen on Turkish history, then this is one of the most important places to visit on the agenda. A museum tells the story of modern-day Turkey, with exhibits that include personal belongings of Atatürk, photographs taken during his life, letters and books. In the summer months the plateau in the front of the mausoleum is the site of special events.

Open *9am–5pm daily, with reduced opening hours in winter.* ***Admission*** *free. Charges for special events.*

Atatürk Mausoleum, Ankara



Atatürk's House

Atatürk's House, Çankaya Caddesi, Çankaya, Ankara. +90 312 309 08 50.

Located in the grounds of the Presidential Palace in Çankaya, which itself is not open to the public, this house was the home of Atatürk after he founded the Republic. Large and elegant, and still displaying the interior design of his day, Atatürk's House offers the rare chance to look into what was once his world. Inside, there are personal belongings and photographs of important historical events. While young children may not appreciate its significance, there is a garden for them to play quietly if they become a tad bored by so much history.

***Open** Sunday only. **Admission** free.*

Boğazkale VALUE

Located northeast of Ankara, Boğazkale in the province of Çorum is one of the region's most historic sites. As Hattushash, Boğazkale was the capital of the Hittite Empire, Anatolia's first ever kingdom. It is said that civilisations lived in this area as far back as 50,000 BC. You can still see massive walls that at one time would have been part of its citadel and its temples. Nearby is **Yazilikaya**, an important city in Hittite times, where you can see some of the country's finest examples of carvings and reliefs in an open-air temple museum site, and the ancient **Alacahöyük**, which is famous for its sphinxes at its city gates and its Royal tombs. In the **Boğazkale National Park** are further ancient sites of interest, most noticeably at **Alişar, Şapinuva**, which lies beside the Çekerek River and was the second most important city in Hittite times, and the town of **Masathöyük**. If exploring this area, stop awhile at **Çorum** itself, where you can see several important buildings, including its 13th-century mosque. The city has a modern quarter so if your youngsters are in need of refreshment after trawling around historic sites then a stop at a cafe or restaurant here could provide the break they need.

Çankiri

At Çankiri, you can see evidence of the ancient city of Gangrea where people lived around the third century BC. The Anatolian region of Turkey is steeped in ancient history. In fact, the first civilisations in this area of the world lived in the region. There are burial grounds and artefacts from the period in the small local museum, along with more recent buildings including an 11th-century fortress and a 16th-century mosque, the Ulu Mosque, built by Sinan, the great architect famous for his work on other great Turkish mosques. Nearby is the Ilgaz National Park where you can stop awhile after visiting the ancient sites, and enjoy a snack in one of the cafes or a packed lunch at one of the picnic areas.

Derinkuyu ★

The area around Derinkuyu contains what are believed to be dozens of underground cities, although not all have been excavated. The largest and the most interesting for visitors is Derinkuyu itself. It reaches down some 55m and has eight levels. It was once home to thousands of fleeing Christians who were being persecuted in the 7th century. They carved entrance tunnels, chambers, bedrooms, kitchens and storage areas out of the rock that characterises the Cappadocia region in the heart of the Anatolia landscape. You can even see stables and a church. Derinkuyu is located south of Nevsehir and Göreme, and the underground city is well signposted. Other underground cities can be found at **Kaymakli**, **Mazi**, **Tatlarin** and **Özkonak**.

Open *8am–5pm daily.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL.*

Divriği ★

A UNESCO World Heritage site, Divriği's **Ulu Mosque** and 13th-century **Medrese** (see p. 222) have some of the finest Seljuk period architectural carvings in the region. Divriği was the capital of the Turkish Mengücek Emirs in the 1100s and 1200s. Now young children may not appreciate the significance of the site and may be a tad troublesome after the journey as it is some way off the beaten track, but if you and your older children are keen on ancient history then a visit could prove interesting for you. There's plenty of countryside nearby for you to take a stroll and let your children let off some steam if need be.

Erzurum

The ancient city of Erzurum can trace its history back to Byzantine times and lies to the east of the country. It has been developed into a sprawling modern and

The underground city of Derinkuyu

cosmopolitan city, but retains many reminders of its past. For example it has a small **archaeological museum**, some **ancient tombs**, the **Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque**, a particularly pretty Ottoman building and its old quarter around its citadel. The city walls were built in the 5th century and have been restored over the years. Your children will love the chance to walk along the walls, which are safe in parts, and see the city of Erzurum from an elevated position. Inside the walls are the remains of several old buildings, which, although incomplete, are worth seeing. Nearby is the skiing resort of **Palandöken**, which is a popular family haunt in the colder months.

Eskişehir

This is another town worth visiting if your youngsters like ancient history. Its Archaeological Museum has some exhibits dating from Phrygian times, and gives a good insight into how Eskişehir was founded around the first millennium BC. Its 13th-century mosque, the lavishly decorated Alaeddin Mosque, and its 16th-century Kurşunlu Complex are well worth a visit. The town is famous for its carved meerschaum tobacco pipes (meerschaum is a rare white mineral), and you can usually find some good examples in the little gift shops dotted around the town to take home with you as a souvenir.

Yassihöyük ★ VALUE

If you and your children like ancient history and admiring the archaeological remains of buildings and towns, then you will love the chance to visit Yassihöyük. Known as Gordion in ancient times, it lies about 100km southwest of Ankara, heading towards Afyon, and was at one time the capital of ancient Phrygia. The remains of the ancient city can still be seen, although part of it is still being excavated. There's a museum, which tells the story of Gordion, along with King Midas who, according to legend, turned everything to gold, and is said to be buried here.

The Top Museums

Ankara Üniversietsi Toy Museum, Ankara ★★ VALUE

Ankara Üniversietsi Toy Museum, Dogol Caddesi, Tandogan, Ankara.
+90 312 212 60 40

This museum will delight your children. There are toys dating back decades from dolls to soldiers, so there will be something for everyone whether you have boys or girls, but it's look and don't touch only. The museum, known as the Toy Museum of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, or the Ankara Üniversietsi Toy Museum, is part of the Ankara University. Established in 1990, it was the first toy museum to open in Turkey with the objective to create an historical record of toys, child culture and social change. Its aim was to preserve toys that

might have otherwise been lost. There are four main areas to see, in four halls, including a hall dedicated to manufactured toys and featuring those made of wood, tin plate, paper and plastic. Dolls and soft toys are exhibited in this section too. Another hall is full to the brim with antique toys, another with foreign toys and the last with traditional toys. Some of the exhibits date back around 100 years.

Open *9am–5pm daily except Mon.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Ethnography Museum

Ethnography Museum, TalaPasha Bulvari Opera, Ankara. *+90 312 311 95 56.*

This interesting museum housed in a delicate Ottoman-style building designed by architect Koyunoğlu, lies not far from the old quarter and Youth Park. Inside, it has a collection of art dating from Seljuk times to the present day. There are exhibits involving handicrafts, such as the art of weaving, and traditional Turkish clothing, including shoes and slippers, shawls and even bridal costumes. Some pretty centuries-old pinky red slippers from the Kirşehir region should delight your girls, while a collection of weaponry, bows and arrows and pistols should really interest your boys. As history museums go, this one should capture the imagination of your children whatever their age.

Open *8.30am–6pm daily except Mon.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Mevlana Museum VALUE

Mevlana Museum, Mevlana Mah., Selimiye Caddesi, Konya. *+90 332 351 12 15.*

With its distinctive green-tiled dome on the roof, the building that houses the Mevlana Museum is easily found in the centre of Konya. It is located next to the Dervish Lodge, home to the Whirling Dervishes. The life of Mevlana, the 13th-century founder of the Mevlana dervish sect, better known as the Whirling Dervishes because of their unusual dance routine, known as *sema*, is celebrated in the museum. There is a collection of personal items that once belonged to Mevlana, along with memorabilia and artefacts associated with the sect. This is also the site of Mevlana's tomb. There is a spectators' area where visitors can sit and enjoy the dance which is performed regularly and every December during Mevlana Week (see p. 204).

Open *9am–5pm daily.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL.*

Steam Locomotive Museum, Ankara ★

Steam Locomotive Museum, Ankara Gar Sahasi, Celai Bayar Bulvari Üzeri, Ankara. *+90 312 309 06 20.*

Your children will love the opportunity to see this collection of gorgeous locomotives dating back to the early days of steam. The Steam Locomotive Museum is an outdoor exhibition area located a short hop from Ankara's main railway station. It is run by the TCDD, the Turkish State

Steam Locomotive Museum, Ankara

Railway. There's another exhibition area inside the station too, so you could visit both in one trip. The museum's exhibits are presented on tracks in beautifully tended and laid-out gardens. You can see vintage steam trains used during World War II, Atatürk's own private railway carriage and cranes that might have once been used to unload them. Two of the most impressive exhibits are a black and red American Baldwin locomotive from the USA that was in service for 45 years, and a Wulcan from England that was put into operation in 1948. A plan at the entrance of the museum shows you what and where the exhibits are. A visit will make a great family day out.

***Open** 9am–6pm daily. **Admission** 12 YTL.*

The Gazi Antep Archaeology Museum FIND

*Corner of Kamil Ocak Cad and Istasyon Cad., Sehitkamil Central District. **www.gaziantepmuzesi.gov.tr***

Located a short walk from the city's fortress that, with its 36 towers, dominates the landscape, the Gazi Antep Archaeology Museum displays important items and artefacts from various periods including the Hittite, Neolithic and Roman times. It tells the story of the city, which, if you and your family are visiting this area of Turkey, close to the Syrian border, you will find fascinating.

***Open** the museum tends to keep irregular hours so check with the tourist office for up-to-date information. **Admission** 10 YTL **Amenities** wheelchair access, cafe.*

The Göreme Open-Air Museum and Göreme National Park ★★ VALUE

The Göreme Open Air Museum and Göreme National Park, Göreme, Cappadocia.

Located at the heart of Cappadocia, the Göreme Open Air Museum has a collection of the most extraordinary 9th- to 11th-century churches and chapels carved into rocks. Surrounding this huge expanse of landscape are the rock formations known as the 'Fairy Chimneys' (see p. 209). The museum tells the story of how the volcanoes of Erciyes, Göllüdağ and Hasandağı erupted and the resulting lava

mixed with mud and ash created a soft tufa layer topped with hardened basalt. Over some 60 million years the soft layer has worn away to create high mushroom-shaped or conical formations and ravines. The landscape has taken on an almost surreal look. Today, there is evidence of churches, as well as underground cities and dwellings that have been carved into the rock, some dating back to Byzantine times. Some of these you can step inside and explore. Your children will love the experience. The village of Göreme has villagers that still live in cave dwellings, many of which have been transformed into restaurants and hotels for the tourist industry. The open-air museum is a little difficult to find although there are a few signposts. If in doubt give the tourist information office at Nevşehir a call (*+90 384 213 42 60*) or ask directions from any one of the towns and villages that make up the Cappadocia region, such as Ürgüp or Göreme. It is one of the best-known museums in the whole of Turkey so anyone you ask should be able to point you in the right direction.

Open: *8am–6pm daily, with reduced opening hours in winter.* ***Admission:*** *10 YTL, excluding some exhibition areas.*

The Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara ★★ VALUE

The Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Hisar Caddesi, Ulus, Ankara. *+90 312 324 31 60.*

This is an outstanding museum that is spacious, bright and welcoming, and affords one of the most important collections of artefacts covering Turkey's many periods of history and cultural influences. It is housed in buildings dating from the Ottoman period, including a bazaar warehouse dating from the 1400s. The museum is easy to find, just down from the citadel in the old quarter of Ankara. Inside, there is a series of halls dedicated to different periods, among them the Classical period, along with the Early Bronze Age, Chalcolithic and the Neolithic periods. The Hittite period is covered at length, for it was the Hittites that, according to research, established the first kingdom in Anatolian history that covered a huge area from the southernmost and westernmost coastal regions to the Black Sea region. Some of the exhibits date from civilisations that lived in the Anatolian region from around 50,000 BC. It is a remarkable collection.

Older children should be especially interested in seeing pots, sculpture and jewellery of such age, although younger children will probably need a few books or games to keep them amused. There is, however, a large garden full of exhibits where, with care, they can let off some energy. The museum has 'child-friendly' toilet facilities, including an area for baby-changing and feeding.

Open *8am–7pm daily.* ***Admission*** *10 YTL adults, 5 YTL children.*

Arts & Crafts

The Anatolia region of Turkey is known for its crafts, and one of the best ways to find some authentic versions is to head for the town's bazaars and market. You will see **copperware**, beautiful **handmade jewellery** and, if you are in the Cappadocia region, look out for the little **cloth dolls** that can be seen everywhere. They are the work of the craftspeople of the Soğanli Valley, near Ürgüp and make a really unusual souvenir to take home. Another town known for its handicrafts is Avanos – its townspeople have made **pots** for centuries and the tradition is continued today in the numerous little studios that line its streets. In the southwestern Anatolia region the town of Gazi Antep is known for its copperware and beautiful **furniture** inlaid with mother of pearl. While you may not want to take a piece of furniture back with you as a souvenir, you will find lovely little boxes for jewellery and knick-knacks made in a similar style.

For Active Families

Bilkent Rollhouse, Ankara ★

FIND

Bilkent Rollhouse, Bilkent, Ankara.
+90 312 266 12 40.

Housed in a large colourful building in the Bilkent area of Ankara, the Bilkent Rollhouse is Turkey's largest **bowling alley**. It is ideal for children as it provides special lanes just for under-12s with guard rails that stop the balls going into the gutter and help ensure they hit the pins. There's nothing worse than a child getting frustrated at not being able to hit the pins when learning to bowl. The Bilkent Rollhouse organises birthday parties for children, so if your youngsters are celebrating while on your visit to Turkey this could be the ideal place to head for. It also hosts tournaments especially for children and if you are lucky you and your children will be able to catch one and join in.

Open *12 noon to 12 midnight*
Admission *Free with the hire of bowling lanes at 6 YTL in the morning, 7 YTL in the afternoon and 8 YTL on the evening. No reduction for children.*

Forest Walks

The Baynam Forest, just off the Kirşehir Highway, and the Kizilcahamam Soğuksu National Park and Çamkoru Forest, both just off the Istanbul to Ankara highway, all offer superb walking areas for active families. While amenities are few, there are nature routes and picnic areas. The areas give you the chance to see Turkey's flora and fauna at its best. Go to your nearest tourist information office (see p. 200) for a booklet detailing some of the best walking areas in the Ankara district.

Hot Air Balloons ★★

One of the best ways to see the Cappadocia region is from above. Several companies offer hot air balloon rides, which are an experience that shouldn't be missed. Children of most ages should find it enjoyable,

although some companies have restrictions on children under the age of 10 years. Two of the companies offering balloon flights over the Cappadocia region are **Kapadokya Balloons** in the town of Nevşehir (*+90 384 271 24 42*; ***www.kapadokya balloons.com***) and **Goreme Balloons**, Sanayi Caddesi in the Koyunyolu Mevkii area of Ürgüp (*+90 384 341 56 62*; ***www.goremeballoons.com).***

Kurtuluş Park ★ FIND

Kurtuluş Parki, Ankara

This park is pretty much central in Ankara and is known for its excellent indoor ice-skating rink. Children of all ages and adults can take to the ice for a real family day out. There are gardens, parkland and play areas too, along with several little eateries so a visit can include more than just skating if you choose. If you are staying in the Bahçelievler district there's ice skating at Belpa too. Telephone the tourist information office (*+90 312 310 04 02*), which has an up-to-date timetable of opening times. These vary depending on the time of year. The information team will also be able to send you off in the right direction as neither is signposted as such and they can take a bit of finding.

Thermal Spas

There are thermal spa centres dotted throughout the region, including six in Ankara alone. They can make a glorious and relaxing day out for all the family, and of course thermal baths are said to have beneficial properties too. 80km or so north of Ankara is the **Kizilcahamam Kaplica Centre**, while the **Hyamana Kaplica** is about 70km to the south of the city, and the **Dutlu Kaplica**, the **Ayaş Kaplica** and the **Dutlu Kaplica** are northwest towards Istanbul. The Ankara tourist office (see p. 200) has a glossy leaflet with opening times, directions and prices of the spa centres.

Shopping

The bazaars and marketplace areas of Ankara at Ulus, around the Çiknkçilar Yokuşu, a hop from the citadel walls and the old quarter, are full to bursting with jewellery, hand-woven carpets, antiques, traditional crafts, clothing, ceramics and pottery, copperware, leatherwear and silverware, so if you want an unusual souvenir to take home then you will probably find it here. Be sure to take plenty of cash with you so you can have fun trying to secure a bargain. Stallholders enjoy haggling. Also try the **Bakircilar Çarişisi** in Ankara, a street known for its copper. If it's modern designer shops you are after, head for **Tunali Hilmi Avenue** in Kizilay, Ankara, where top quality names will entice you in to buy, assuming you have a full purse or a suitably tolerant credit card with you of course. Also try the **Atakule Tower** at Çankaya where there are some smart shops, along with various shopping malls and streets that can be found in the out-of-town

districts. **Ankara** has a good choice of shops so you should never be too far away from shopping opportunities.

Elsewhere, most of the major towns and cities have shopping areas, and even the villages have shops selling local crafts and produce. Places like **Göreme, Konya** and **Avanos** tend to have shops selling local handicraft items like ceramics and pottery, jewellery, carpets and copperware as souvenirs for tourists. **Kayseri**, where there's every likelihood you may stop en route to the Cappadocia region as it is here you will probably fly into, has a large shopping centre called **The Medrese** created within a complex of historic buildings. It sells modern day items as well as traditional crafts.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

Prices quoted are for a double room in low season.

INEXPENSIVE

Atabey Hotel ★★ FIND

Yeşil Ada Mah Cami Caddesi, Eğirdir +90 246 311 50 06. Located right on the banks of Lake Eğirdir

A small and well-presented hotel, the Atabey Hotel is a great place to stay if you and your children are planning to explore the 'Lake District' (see p. 209) of Turkey. It is within reach of Pamukkale to the west, Isparta and Konya, and close to Lake Beysenir where there are good walking and nature routes. Lake Eğirdir itself offers plenty for families who like the great outdoors too. Again, cycling, walking and nature are all on your doorstep if staying at the Atabey Hotel. The hotel doesn't have that many amenities although the guestrooms are comfortable and if you need a cot or a special bed for your children then the hotel team is happy to assist. The on-site restaurant with its little terrace overlooking the lake – the views are delightful – has a menu designed especially for children.

***Rooms** 20 including family suites. **Rates** from around 250 YTL. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** restaurant and terrace. **In room** en-suite bathroom, TV, AC, cots, special children's beds and high chairs available on request.*

MODERATE

Büyükhanli Park Hotel ★★

Simon Bolivar Caddesi No 32, Çankaya, Ankara +90 312 441 56 00; www.buyukhanliparkhotel.com. Located in the main thoroughfare of the Çankaya district of Ankara.

The Büyükhanli Park Hotel is a pleasing, modern hotel located in the heart of the city of Ankara. As such, it is a good base from which to explore and ideal for a family. Its guestrooms are well presented with every amenity, and the hotel is happy to provide cots and children's beds on request. The hotel is positioned so that most rooms overlook its swimming pool and sun terraces, where a children's pool and play area is available for

your little ones to enjoy themselves. A few steps away is the hotel's health suite, which, although not suitable for young children, you and your teenagers may like to use. It has a variety of exercise machines, like a treadmill and stepper, and a spa with a sauna and steam room. Its restaurant is spacious and atmospheric, while the menu is Turkish and international. A special menu is provided for children and the team is happy to provide a high chair to make it easier for your younger children to eat comfortably. The Büyükhanli Park Hotel offers everything you need for a family holiday with children – good location, good facilities and good accommodation.

***Rooms** 110, including 11 family suites and 1 Ambassador Suite. **Rates** rooms from around 400 YTL. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** swimming pool with children's pool, health suite and spa, restaurant and garage parking. **In room:** en-suite bathroom, TV, AC, cots, high chairs and children's beds available on request.*

EXPENSIVE

The Serinn Hotel ★★★ FIND

Esbelli Sokak No. 36 Ürgüp, Cappadocia +90 384 341 60 76; www.serinnhotel.com. Located in the centre of Ürgüp, near the main square.

Your children will love the chance to stay at this hotel created within a restored natural cave at Ürgüp, in the heart of the Cappadocia region. It will really capture their imagination. The views of the town and the mountains from the hotel as well as the facilities are top notch and there are amenities offered specially for children, such as DVD and book hire and a special menu in its restaurant with dishes designed for smaller appetites. The cuisine is Turkish and international so there should be something to suit even the fussiest child. You can even have your breakfast or evening meal on the hotel's terraces that overlook the amazing rock formations of the Cappadocia landscape, which is really spooky. Each of the five rooms is presented with quality furnishings, like lavish drapes and fine cotton linen. The Serinn Hotel will arrange for personal tour guides, car hire and leisure pursuits such as a Cappadocia hot air balloon experience, which is a must, along with trekking, horse-riding and mountain bike tours for all the family.

***Rooms** 5. **Rates** from around 600 YTL. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** restaurant with children's menu, DVD hire, laundry service. **In room** WiFi, en suite bathroom, central heating/AC, safety deposit box.*

FAMILY-FRIENDLY DINING

INEXPENSIVE

Selcuklu Beykonagi Restaurant ★★ VALUE

Mimar Muzaffer Caddesi, Gazi Alemşah Mah No 38, Konya +90 332 353 32 79. Located in central Konya, not far from the Sultan Kiliç Arslan house.

If grilled meats and fish, dönar kebabs and şiş kebabs, and mezes comprising lots of little dishes including dips, cold meats, vegetables and salads are you and your family's choice then dining at the Selcuklu Beykonagi Restaurant in central Konya should suit you a treat. The restaurant is especially welcoming of families and will provide high chairs and cushions, drinks and special meals for your children. They will certainly be made a fuss of. The restaurant is housed in a lovely old mansion building dating from a couple of hundred years ago, with a décor that has managed to retain its historic character. It is open for lunch and evening dining most days.

***Open** noon–11pm. **Prices** 20 YTL with drinks. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** high chairs, children's portions.*

MODERATE

Altintepe Turistik Tesisleri ★★

VALUE

Altintepe Mah., Yukari Eriklet, Kayseri. +90 352 344 23 23. Located on the outskirts of Kayseri, just off the road to the airport.

The Altintepe Turistik Tesisleri is a good choice if staying awhile in Kayseri, perhaps en route on a flight from Istanbul to the town and heading out to explore the Cappadocia region. It serves wholesome dishes of grilled meats, fish, stews and pasta, plus of course meze meals. Its *levrek pilakisi*, a stew of sea bass and vegetables, is particularly delicious. The restaurant has a children's menu, a vegetarian menu and a good choice of desserts and beverages. Its baklava is usually fresh out of the kitchen. It is open for breakfast, lunch and evening dining, the latter often accompanied by traditional music.

***Open** 7am–11pm. **Prices** average meze meal 25 YTL with drinks extra. **Credit** MC, V. **Amenities** children's menu, high chairs.*

EXPENSIVE

Elai Restaurant ★★★

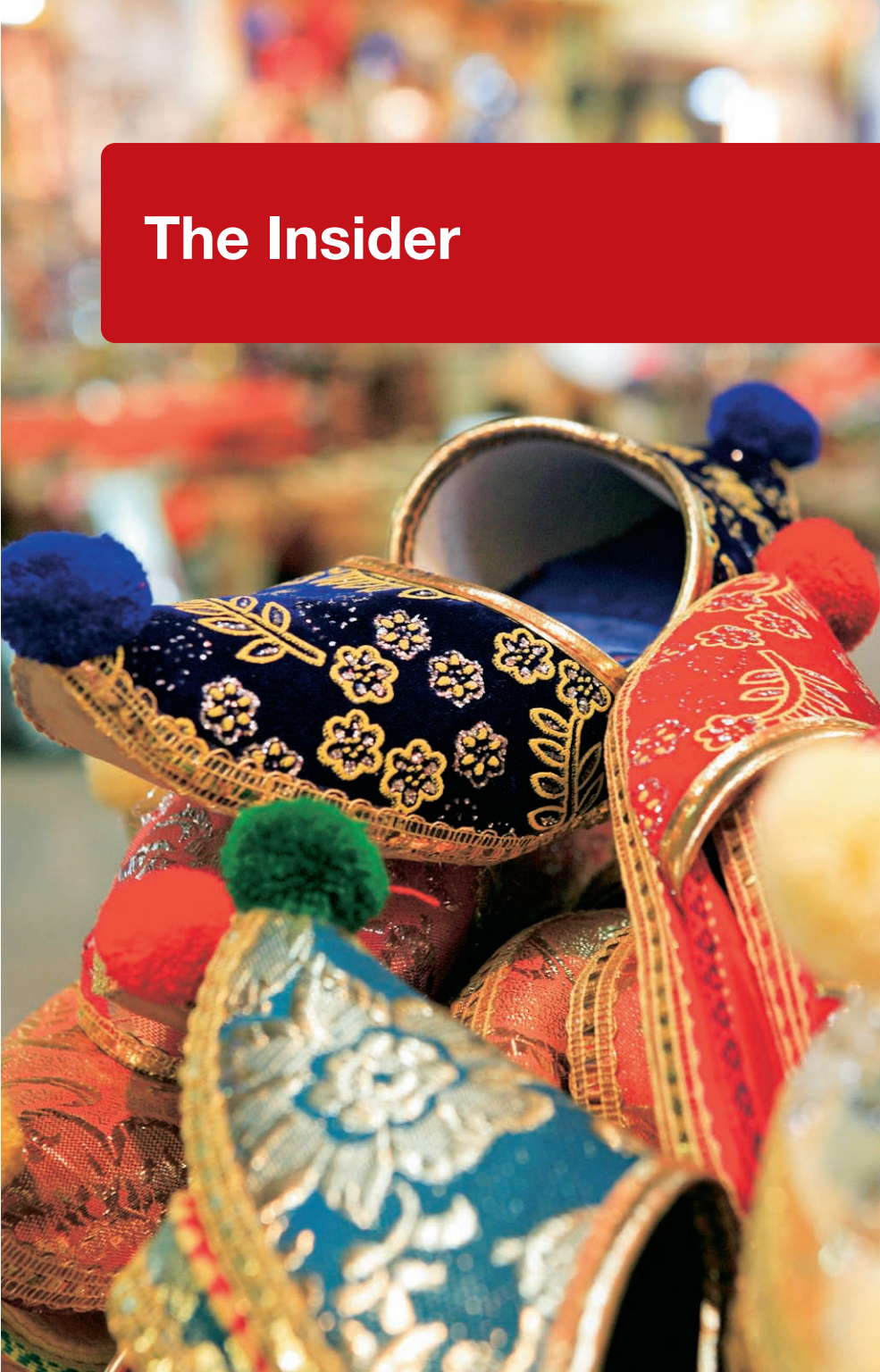
FIND

Tekelli Mah, Göreme +90 384 219 31 81. Located in the centre of the village of Göreme, an easy walk from the open-air museum.

If you are visiting the wonderful rock formations of the Cappadocia region and staying awhile in the traditional village of Göreme, where some residents still live in cave-like homes, then eating at the Elai Restaurant could be a good choice. It is not the cheapest restaurant in the village but does cater for the more discerning diner and offers a particularly good menu of mainly French inspired dishes. There are à la carte Turkish dishes on the menu too. A special children's selection means your little ones are cared for and happy, and a drinks menu includes some rather fine wines as well as flavoured teas and juices. The restaurant is generally buzzing with people who have travelled miles to see the rock formations.

***Open:** 12pm–3pm and 6pm–late. **Main Courses** 30–35 YTL. Children's dishes are around 20% cheaper. **Credit:** MC, V. **Amenities:** children's menu.*

The Insider



The language of Turkey is Turkish and the current form is derived from influences going back as far as the 11th century. It's not an easy language to learn, but for an English-speaking visitor learning a few basic terms and phrases would be appreciated by the locals and is likely to give you and your family a sense of satisfaction in that you have tried to integrate. The letters are phonetic so if you see a word written it is probably pronounced as you would in English, which is a bonus. There are a few letters pronounced slightly differently though. For instance ç is pronounced ch, ü is ew, ö sounds like ur and ş is a type of sh sound. Below is a selection of basic vocabulary words and greetings with pronunciations in brackets. It's worth having a try, but if you are stuck, English is widely spoken in the cities and certainly the tourist areas.

USEFUL TERMS & PHRASES

Basic Vocabulary & Greetings

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Yes	**Evet**	(e-vet)
No	**Hayir**	(higher)
Please	**Lütfen**	(lute-fen
Thank you	**Teşekkür ler**	(tesh-e-kür- ler)
You are welcome	**Bir şey degil**	(beer say de-chil)
Excuse me	**Affedersiniz**	(af-feb-der-see-neez)
Hello	**Merhaba**	(mare-hah-bah)
Good morning	**Günaydin**	(goon- eye-din)
Good afternoon	**Iyi günler**	(ee-yee goo -n-ler)
Good evening	**Iyi akşamlar**	(ee-yee ak-sham-lar)
Good night	**Iyi geceler**	(ee-yee gedge-e-ler)
Goodbye (informal)	**Güle güle**	(goo-l goo-l)
Goodbye (formal)	**Hoşça kalim**	(hosh-cha ka-lum)
Welcome	**Hoşgeldiniz**	(hosh-gald-in-eez)
Mr	**Bay**	(bay)
Mrs / Miss	**Bayan**	(bay-an)
What is your name?	**Adiniz ne?**	(ah-din-eez ne)
My name is...	**Ismim ...**	(is-mim)

Getting Around

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
I do not understand	**Anlamadim**	(an-la-muh-im)
What?	**Ne?**	(neh)
Why?	**Niçin meden?**	(Neh-den)
Where is...?	**Nerededir?**	(Neh-reh-deh-dir)

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
When?	**Ne zaman?**	(Neh za-man)
How much?	**Kaç?**	(Ka-k)
How many?	**Kaç tane?**	(Ka-k tarne)
Left	**Sol**	(sol)
Right	**Sağ**	(saa)
Straight ahead	**Düz**	(doh-roo)
Shop	**Dükkan**	(dewk-kan)
Market	**Çarği**	(char-see)
Baazar	**Pazar**	(pa-zar)
Church	**kilise**	(kee-leh-see)
Mosque	**cami**	(ja-mee)
Museum	**müze**	(mew-zeh)
Palace	**saray**	(sar-eye)
Park	**park**	(park)
Tourist information office	**turism danişma bürosu**	(too-riz-um da-nuhsh-mah bew-ro-soo)
Airport	**havalimani**	(ha-va-lee-ma-nuh)
Bus	**otobüs**	(o-to-bew-s)
Bus station	**otogar**	(o-to-gar)
Minibus	**dolmuş**	(dol-moo-sh)
Taxi	**Taksi**	(tak-see)
Timetable	**terife**	(ta-ree-feh)

Emergency

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Help	**Imdat**	(eem-dat)
Stop	**Dur**	(door)
Where is the nearest telephone?	**En yakim telefon nerede?**	(En-ya-kubn-teh-leh-fon-neh-reh-deh)
Telephone	**Telefon**	(teh-leh-fon)
Where is the nearest hospital?	**En yakim hastane nerede?**	(En-ya-kubn-has-ta-neh-neh-reh-deh)
Hospital	**Hastahane**	(has-ta-neh)
I'm ill	**Rahatsizim**	(ra-hey-tiz-eem)
Help me	**Yardim edin**	(yar-dim-ee-din)
I'm lost	**Kayboldum**	(caee-bo-leh-dum)
Call an ambulance	**Bie ambulans çağrin**	(beer am-hoo-lans-chah-ruhn)

Babies & Children

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Baby food	**Bebek mamasi**	(be-bek ma-hen-asi)
Nappy	**Çocuk bezi**	(char-kuk beh-zee)

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Nappy cream	**Çocuk bezi kremi**	(char- kuk beh-zee crem-hee)
High-factor sun cream for children	**Çocuk için yüksek faktor güneş kremi**	(char-kuk i-ch-in yew-k-sek fa-k-tor gew-nes crem-hee)
High chair	**(Yüksek) Mama iskemlesi**	(yew-k-sek mah-ma isk-em-les-ee)
Pasteurised milk	**Pastörize Süt**	(pas-tir-ise suit)
Baby milk powder	**Bebek için süt tozu**	(be-bek i-ch-in suit toe-zu)
Baby nose drops	**Bebek için burun damlasi**	(be-bek i-ch-in bu-run dam-las-ee)
Apple	**Elma**	(ee-l-ma)
Banana	**Muz**	(mooz)
Pear	**Armut**	(ar-mut)
Grapes	**Üzüm**	(ew-zew-m)
Playground	**Oyun Alani**	(o-yun a-lan-ee)
I need to boil my baby's bottle	**Bebeğimin şişesini kaynamam gerekli**	(beb-he-oo-im-in shi-she-sin-ee kay-nam-am ger-ek-li)
My baby has diarrhoea	**Bebeğimin diyaresi var**	(beb-he-oo-im-in di-yar-esi var)
Where is the pharmacy?	**Eczane neredédir?**	(ech-zane neh-reh-deh-dir)
Where can I change my baby's nappy?	**Bebeğimin bezini nerede değistirebilirim?**	(beb-he-oo-im-in be-zini neh-reh-deh de-oo-ist-ee-ree-bil-ee-ree-im)
Do you mind if I breast-feed my baby here?	**Bebeğimi burada emzirerek beslersem sizing için sorun olur mu?**	(beb-he-oo-im-i bew-rada hem-zi-ree-reek besh-ler-sem si-zing i-ch-in so-run ol-ur mo)
Do you have any more napkins?	**Daha fazla peçete rica edebilirmiyim sizden?**	(da-ha fah-z-la pe-chet-ee ri-ca hed-ee-bil-ee-ree-me-yim si-z-den)
My baby / child has been vomiting	**Bebeğim / Çocuğum kusuyordu**	(beb-he-oo-im / chew-cu-oo-um kus-u-yee-ord-oo)
My baby has a temperature	**Bebeğimin ateşi çıktı**	(beb-he-oo-im-in ate-shi chik-t-ee)
Is there a lot of salt in this dish?	**Bu yemekte çok tuz var mı?**	(Bo yem-eek-tee chok tu-ze var my)
Please ring for a doctor	**Lütfen doktoru çağırın**	(lute-fen dok-to-ru ch-a-oo-e-rin)

Shopping

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Open	**açik**	(a-chuhk)
Closed	**kapali**	(ka-pal-uh)
Shop	**Dükkan**	(dewk-kan)
Market	**Çarşi**	(char-see)

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Bazaar	**Pazar**	(pa-zar)
Price	**Fiyat**	(fay-at)
How much is this?	**Ne kadar**	(neh ka-dar)
Cheap	**Ucuz**	(oo-joo-z)
Expensive	**Pahali**	(paa-ha-lub)
Very expensive	**Çok pahalt**	(char-ock paa-ha-lub)
I want	**Istiyorum**	(ist-ee-your-um)
Do you have?	**Var mi?**	(var muh?)
Water	**su**	(sue)
Milk	**süt**	(suit)
Beer	**bira**	(beer-a)
Wine	**şarap**	(shar-ap)
Tea	**çay**	(ch-eye)
Coffee	**kahve**	(car-vay)
Food	**yemek**	(ye-meck)
Bakery	**firin**	(fuh-rubn)
Bank	**banka**	(ban-ka)
Book shop	**kitapçi**	(kee-tap-chub)
Pharmacy	**eczane**	(ee-ja-za-neh)
Post office	**postane**	(pos-ta-neh)
Supermarket	**supermarket**	(sew-per-mar-ket)

Numbers

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Zero	**sifir**	(su-fuhr)
One	**bir**	(beer)
Two	**iki**	(icky)
Three	**üç**	(ooch)
Four	**dört**	(dirt)
Five	**beş**	(besh)
Six	**alty**	(al-ter)
Seven	**yedi**	(yea-dee)
Eight	**sekiz**	(seck-is)
Nine	**dokuz**	(dock-uz)
Ten	**on**	(on)

Days of the Week

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Monday	**Pazartesi**	(pa-zar-the-see)
Tuesday	**Sali**	(sa-luh)
Wednesday	**Çarşamba**	(char-sham-ha)
Thursday	**Perşembe**	(per-shem-beh)
Friday	**Cuma**	(joo-ma)

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Saturday	**Cumartesi**	(joo-mar-teh-see)
Sunday	**Pazar**	(pa-zar)

Colours

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Black	**siyah**	(see-yah)
White	**beyaz**	(bay-yaz)
Blue	**mavi**	(ma-vee)
Green	**yeşil**	(yeh-shell)
Yellow	**sari**	(sa-ru-b)
Red	**kirmizi**	(kubr-muh-zub)

Useful Words

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Morning	**Sahah**	(sa-bah)
Afternoon	**Oğleden sonar**	(ur-leh-den son-ra)
Evening	**Akşam**	(ak-sam)
Yesterday	**Dün**	(dewn)
Today	**Bugün**	(boo-gewn)
Tomorrow	**Yarin**	(ya-ruhn)
Hot	**sicak**	(suh-jak)
Cold	**soğuk**	(soh-ook)
Big	**büyük**	(bew-yewk)
Small	**küyük**	(kew-chewk)

Accommodation & Eating Out

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Double room	**iki kişlilik bir oda**	(ee-kee kee-shee-leek-beer o-da)
Twin room	**çift yatakli bir oda**	(cheef- ya-tak-lu berr o-da)
Restaurant	**lokanta**	(lo-kan-ta)
I have a reservation	**rezervasyonum var**	(reh-zeer-vas-yoo-noom var)
A table for...	**kişilik bir masa....**	(Kee-shee-leek beer ma-sa....)
Menu	**yemek listesi**	(yee-mek lees-teh-see)
Breakfast	**kahvalti**	(ka-val-ta)
Lunch	**öğle yemeği**	(ur-leh yeh-meh-ee)
Dinner	**akşam yemeği**	(ak-sham yeh-meh-ee)
Starter	**meze**	(mez-eh)
Main course	**ana yemek**	(an-a yeh-mek)
Dessert	**tatli**	(tat-luh)
Beer	**bira**	(beer-a)
Wine	**şarap**	(shar-ap)

English	Turkish	Pronunciation
Tea	**çay**	(ch-eye)
Coffee	**kahve**	(car-vay)

Menu Guide

What Is It?

Alabalık Trout
Ananas Pineapple
Ançuez Anchovy
Balık Fish
Barbunya Red mullet
Beyin Brain
Bezelye Peas
Biber Pepper (*kara biber:* black pepper)
Bıldırcın Quail
Bonfile Filet of beef
Çam fıstığı Pine nut
Ciğer Liver
Çilek Strawberry
Çorba Soup
Çupra Sea bream
Dana Veal
Domates Tomato
Domuz Pork
Dondurma Ice cream
Ekmek Bread
Elma Apple
Enginar Artichoke
Erik Plum
Et Meat
Fasulye Bean
Havuç Carrot
Hindi Turkey
İspanak Spinach
Istravrit Mackerel
Jambon Ham
Kabak Squash (zucchini, pumpkin, and the like)
Kalkan Turbot
Karides Shrimp
Karnıbahar Cauliflower
Karpuz Watermelon
Kavun Melon
Kayısı Apricot
Kaz Goose
Kefal Gray mullet
Kılıç Swordfish
Kiraz Cherry
Köfte Meatball
Kuzu Lamb
Lağus Grouper
Lavaş Grilled unleavened bread
Levrek Sea bass
Limon Lemon
Lüfer Bluefish
Mantar Mushroom
Marul Lettuce
Meyva Fruit
Meze Appetizer
Mezgit Cod
Mısır Corn
Mürekkep balığı Squid
Muz Banana
Ördek Duck
Palamut Bonito
Patates Potato
Patlıcan Eggplant/aubergine
Peynir Cheese
Pide Flat bread
Pilaf (pilâf) Rice
Piliç Chicken
Portakal Orange
Salatalik Cucumber
Sardalya Sardine
Şeftali Peach
Şeker Sugar
Sığır Beef
Soğan Onion
Som Salmon
Sosis Sausage
Tarak Scallop
Tatlılar Sweets
Tavuk Hen (for stewing)
Tereyağı Butter
Ton Tuna
Torik Large bonito
Tuz Salt
Un Flour
Üzüm Grapes
Yumurta Eggs
Zeytin Olive
Zeytinyağı Olive oil

How Is It Prepared?

Buğulama Steamed
Çevirme Meat roasted on a spit
Çiğ Raw
Doğranmış Chopped
Dolma Stuffed
Ezme Paste
Fırın Roasted or baked; oven
Füme Smoked
Guveç Earthenware dish; casseroles cooked in this pot
Haşlama Cooked, boiled
İzgara Grilled
Islim Braised
Kavurma Fried or roasted
Kebap Roasted
Pane Breaded and fried
Püre Purée
Rosto Roast meat
Saç Iron griddle for cooking over wood fires
Sahanda Fried
Şiş Skewer
Sote Sauté
Tandır Clay lined oven
Taşım Boiled
Tava Fried

Drinks

Ayran Yogurt drink made by the addition of water and salt
Bira Beer
Çay Tea
Kayısı suyu Apricot juice
Kiraz suyu Cherry juice
Kola Cola
Maden suyu or soda Carbonated mineral water
Meyve suyu Fruit juice
Portakal suyu Orange juice
Raki Alcoholic drink made of aniseed and diluted with water
Şarap Wine
Şekerli With sugar
Şekersiz Unsweetened
Şişe suyu Bottled water
Soğuk içecekler Beverages
Su Water
Süt Milk
Suyu Juice

Appetizers

Ara sıcak Hot appetizers (translated literally, “in the middle hot”)
Arnavut ciğeri Spicy fried liver with onions

Beyin haşlaması Boiled brain
Beyin kızartması Fried brain
Börek Flaky pastry, either baked or fried
Cacık Salad of yogurt, cucumber, and garlic; often served as a soup
Çiğ köfte Spicy raw meatballs
Çoban salatası Salad of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, onions, and mint in olive oil and lemon
Ezme salatası Spicy relish of chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, hot green chili peppers, onion, and parsley
Fesuliye piyası White bean with onion salad
Havuç salatası Carrot salad
Hibeş Spread of chickpeas, red pepper, onion, and yogurt
Humus Chickpea purée
Patlıcan salatası Purée of roasted eggplant (also served warm; also refers to eggplant sautéed with tomatoes and peppers)
Sigara böreği Fried filo "cigar" pastry filled with cheese
Soğuk mezeler Cold appetizers
Su böreği Baked filo filled with meat or cheese
Talaş böreği Puff pastry filled with meat
Yalancı dolması Stuffed grape leaves (no meat)
Yaprak dolması Stuffed grape leaves (sometimes with meat)

Soups

Balık çorbası Fish soup
Domatesli pirinç çorbası Tomato and rice soup
Et suyu Consommé
Ezo gelin çorbası Red lentil soup with bulgur and mint
Işkembe çorbası Tripe soup (also kokoreç)
Mantar corbası Mushroom soup
Mercimek çorbası Lentil soup
Sebze çorbası Vegetable soup

Meats & Kebaps

Adana kebabı Meatballs of spicy chopped lamb flattened and grilled on a skewer
Böbrek Kidney
Çöp kebabı Same as *çöp şiş*
Çöp şiş Small lamb cubes grilled on a skewer; also called *çöp kebabı*
Döner kebap Thin slices of lamb roasted on a vertical revolving spit
Içli köfte Corn or bulgur balls stuffed with minced lamb (boiled or fried)
Iskender kebabı Sliced *döner kebabı* served on a layer of *pide,* tomatoes, and yogurt, and covered with melted butter
Izgara köfte Grilled meatballs
Kadın budu köfte "Lady's thigh," meatballs of lamb and rice, deep-fried
Karışık izgara Mixed grill
Kuzu budu rostosu Roasted leg of lamb
Kuzu pirzolası Grilled lamb chops
Şiş kebabı Marinated lamb cubes grilled on a skewer

Desserts

Aşure Thick sweet pudding of whole wheat, mixed fruits, and nuts
Baklava Flaky pastries soaked in syrup or honey
Çukulatalı pudding Chocolate pudding
Fırın sütlaç Baked rice pudding
Hanım göbeği Honey-soaked flour pastry
Helva National favorite of semolina, sesame paste or flour, sugar, and nuts
Kaymaklı kayısı tatlısı Poached apricots stuffed with cream
Krem karamel Crème caramel
Künefe Butter-soaked pastry filled with melted cheese, soaked in syrup, and served hot
Muhallebi Milk pudding
Revani Honey-soaked semolina
Sütlaç Rice pudding
Tatlılar Sweets or desserts
Tavukgöğsü Sweet chicken pudding

Other Favorite Dishes

Damat dolması Squash stuffed with ground lamb and nuts
Domates doması Stuffed tomatoes
Etli biber dolması Stuffed green peppers
Gözleme Folded savory pancake filled with potato, cheese, or meat
Hunkar beğendi Eggplant purée topped with lamb cubes (literally, "the sultan was pleased")
Imam bayıldı Stuffed eggplant (literally, "the imam fainted")
Lahmacun Fast food of thin crust dough topped with minced lamb, tomato, and onion
Mantı Meat dumplings topped with warm sauce of yogurt, garlic, and chili oil
Menemen Wet omelet of beaten eggs, tomato, and green peppers
Musakka Casserole of eggplant, vegetables, and ground lamb
Peynirli tost Grilled cheese sandwich (also called *tost*)
Simit Sesame seed-coated soft pretzel

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